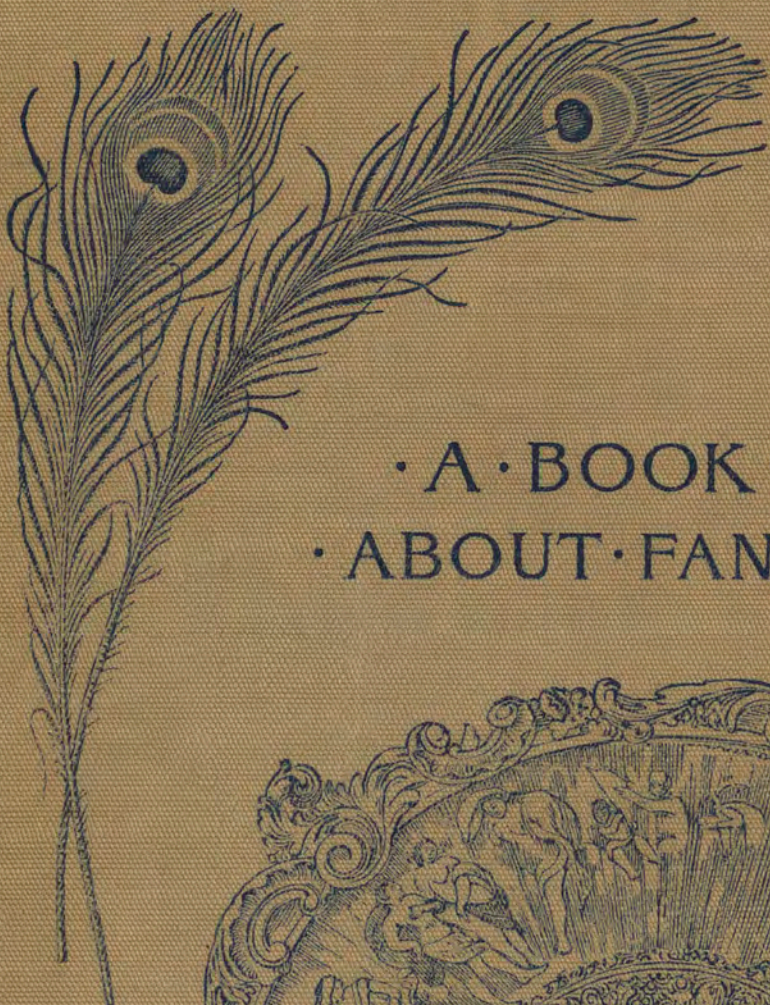


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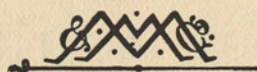






A BOOK ABOUT FANS







# A BOOK ABOUT FANS

## THE HISTORY OF FANS AND FAN-PAINTING

BY

M. A. FLORY

WITH

A CHAPTER ON FAN-COLLECTING

BY

MARY CADWALADER JONES



New York

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1895

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## PREFACE

THE loan exhibition held at South Kensington in 1870 gave a great impulse to the collection and decoration of fans; and since that time many other exhibitions, although less important, have allowed amateurs to admire and to draw instruction from specimens showing the marvelous skill of expert workmen in this charming art. One of these opportunities was afforded by the New York Society of Decorative Art, which organized a loan collection in the spring of 1882, in order to call attention to the possibilities of fan decoration and mounting, and since that time the Society has continued to encourage American decorators to rival the delightful work of foreign artists. An interesting exhibition was also held by the Grolier Club in 1891.

In a country where progress of astonishing rapidity has been made in all branches of decor-



ative art, one cannot but wonder at the prevalent indifference to fan-painting. The lack of sources of correct information and the difficulty of procuring the necessary materials have hitherto paralyzed the efforts of those who desired to attempt it; but when it becomes more generally known that at the Society of Decorative Art all necessary information as well as materials can be obtained, it may be hoped that this beautiful branch of industrial art may be established in this country. American artists should follow the example of French painters, and sign many a masterpiece which will represent our own school and era of fan-painting, in the collections already formed, to be handed down to the future as precious relics.

The modern fan is so associated with the art of coquetry and the paraphernalia of beauty that we scarcely realize its having a history. The French, however, have treated the evolution of the fan with much completeness, and in England, brief sketches on the subject have occasionally appeared in magazines, but thus far a history of fans has not been published in book form.

The subject, though it may seem frivolous, amply repays careful study, and will not fail to interest the reader, provided the demands on both his patience and his time are not too great. Few persons have leisure to peruse an exhaustive volume about these dainty feminine weapons, which yet, however, cannot be thoroughly treated without entering somewhat into the social and artistic history of many nations. Our manifold duties and pleasures scarcely permit us more time for attention to the fan than to the beautiful butterfly which for a moment delights us by the graceful fluttering of its painted wings. It may therefore not be a useless undertaking to assemble some salient facts, omitting many details from the abundant material which has been brought to light by French and English writers. In doing this I gratefully acknowledge the help which some of these writings have rendered me, particularly the "History of Fans" by S. Blondel, who has kindly given me permission to make use of his valuable work, highly appreciated by collectors. Though the subject will lose somewhat in fulness by presenting it in so small a compass, yet there



may be compensation in meeting the requirements of those who wish to become acquainted with the main facts without necessarily spending much of their leisure on it.

The generosity of American and European collectors has enabled me to give some of the finest specimens of antique fans, while painters and lovers of art who delight in finding efforts to revive this beautiful art patronized, will appreciate even more the valuable examples painted by modern masters, and will feel most grateful to the owners who kindly permitted me to reproduce them, as the opportunities of seeing them are very rare, the private collections in which they are treasured not being accessible to the public.

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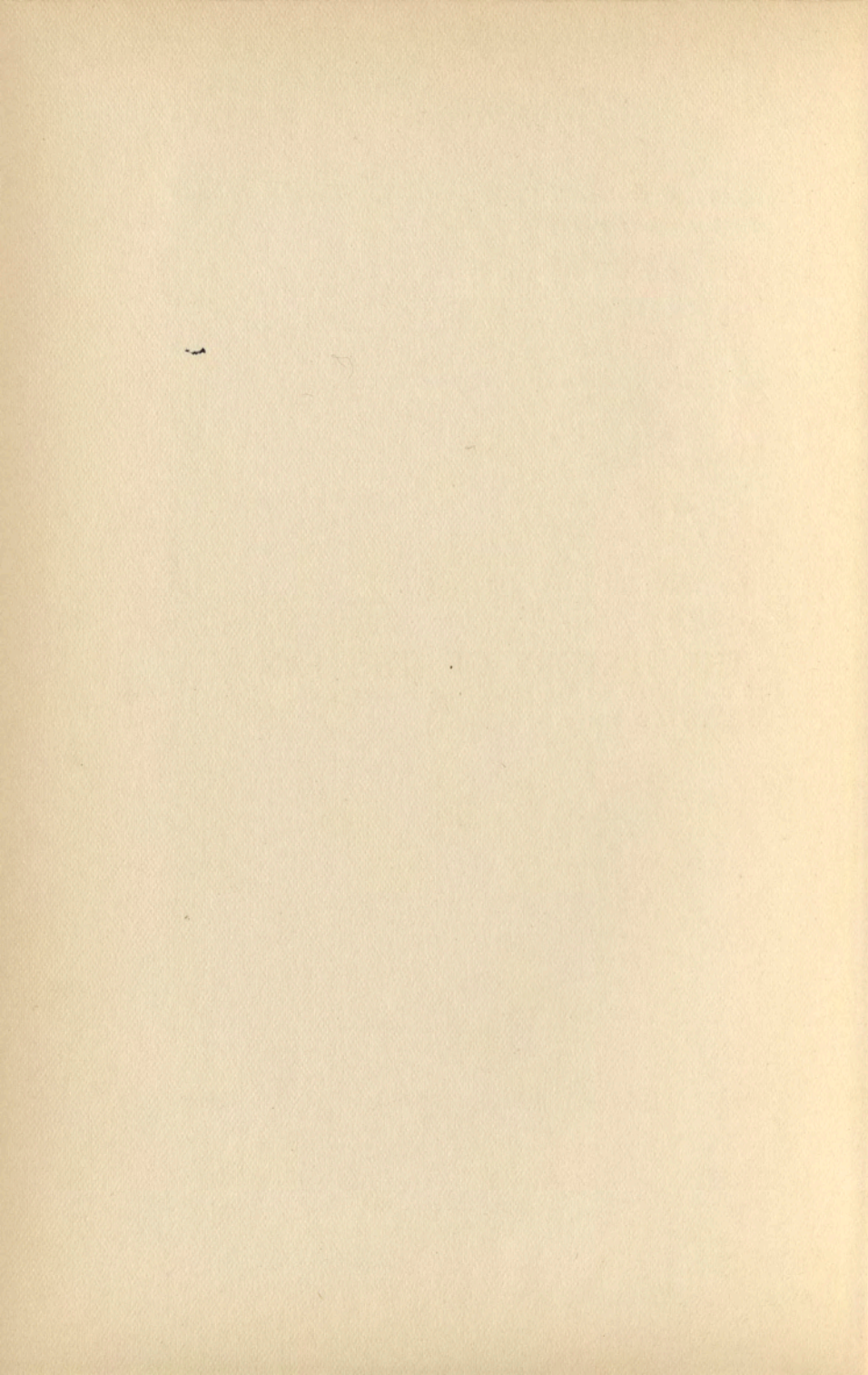
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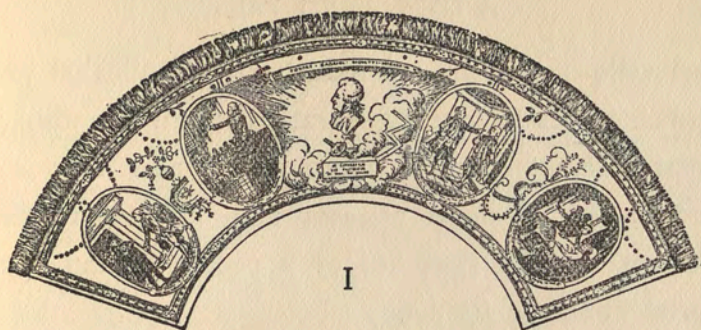


i

THE HISTORY OF THE FAN







# I

## THE HISTORY OF THE FAN

CAMARGO.

*Quoi! votre éventail?*

RAFAËL.

*Oui, n'est-il pas beau, ma foi?*

*Il est large à peu près comme un quartier de lune,  
Cousu d'or comme un paon. — Frais et joyeux comme une  
Aile de papillon. — Incertain et changeant  
Comme une femme. — Il a les paillettes d'argent  
Comme Arlequin. — Gardez-le, il vous fera peut-être  
Penser à moi; c'est tout le portrait de son maître.*

CAMARGO.

*Le portrait en effet!*

— DE MUSSET.

THE history of the fan is full of human sentiment: this trifling object reveals the customs, the dainty tastes, the artistic appreciation of our ancestors; and it is particularly interesting as an evidence of the patience and scrupulous care with which artisans of past generations perfected their work, for objects of greater importance than the fan give scarcely better proofs of their



marvellous skill in art industry. Of all that an epoch leaves to future generations there is nothing that characterizes it more truly and fully — nothing that more attracts and maintains our interest in the past life of a people — than the productions of its art.

The use of the fan, far from losing in prestige, seems likely to be perpetuated into all ages. In the hands of a clever woman, it is not only an attractive trifle, but still an important weapon. As Gay sings, —

“Unhappy lovers ! how will you withstand  
When these new arms shall grace the charmer’s hand ?”

The chain of tradition, followed as far as possible into the past, carries us back to the time when the origin of the fan is derived from legends.

“King Nila’s daughter,” so says the great Sanskrit poem, “Mahabharata,” “had charge of the sacred fire upon which her father’s success and glory depended. She fanned the fire, which refused to burn. It was of no use to fan it ; for the fire was seized with love for the beautiful

princess, and could not live but with the fanning of her own sweet breath."

The Chinese, who claim to have invented the fan, also trace its origin into the land of legends. Lang-sin, the daughter of an all-powerful mandarin, was present at a Feast of Lanterns. Overcome with the heat, she removed her mask—a daring thing to do. She still held it near enough to screen her features, while waving it rapidly to and fro; and it is said that this caprice, speedily imitated by other beauties of the court, originated the use of the screen fan.

An old Japanese tale attributes the invention of the folding fan to the sorrowing widow of Atsumori, the noble youth who succumbed to the fierce sense of duty of Kumagai Maozané. Hiding her grief in the temple of Mieido in Kioto, she performed as a nun the pious duty of nursing an abbot who was devoured by a fever, and cured him by fanning him with a folding paper fan. To this day, the priests of Mieido are considered particularly skilled in the manufacture of fans; and consequently many fan shops of the islands adopted the name Mieido.



The rivet which binds the blades or sticks of a fan together has perhaps the most interesting legendary origin. Kashima, one of the Japanese gods, was charged to subdue the eastern part of the world. He accomplished it by running his sword straight through the earth. In the course of time the sword hardened into stone and was named Kanameishi, which means rivet, and the earth being thus riveted and steadied, the people enjoyed the sense of full security. This rivet suggested to them, moreover, one of the principal parts of the folding fan. Many imaginative stories, to a few of which I have alluded, are fully given in the charming volumes which in these latter years have disclosed to us the Japanese folklore.

When was the fan transformed to a thing of ornament and beauty as well as of use? This is even more difficult to determine than the time of its origin. The earliest traces of the longing that prompts man to adorn and beautify what he honours and prizes especially can be noticed in the rough implements which represent the first fans.

The original shape of the fan, called in India punkah, as represented in Hindustani bas-reliefs, is very similar to the leaf of a palm tree, and we may see by it that nature's lessons were utilized in the remotest times.

The Sanskrit poet, Krishna-Dwapayana, describes the couch of the monarch Pandou as provided with a fan, a flyflap (tchaounry), the tail of a white buffalo, and a parasol. Many passages in the Sanskrit poems "Ramayana" and "Mahabharata," as well as the bas-reliefs of that era, attest that the fan, the parasol, and the flyflap were royal attributes in ancient India and dignified by use among the deities and demi-deities of the Hindoo heaven. In works on ancient monuments and art we find reproductions of fans in the shape of leaves attached to long handles, which we are told are called talapat, signifying palm-tree leaf (Fig. 1). Similar standards are still in use by the Buddhist priests in the kingdom of Siam.

In the British Museum, the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, and also in the Louvre, many ancient miniatures show that originally



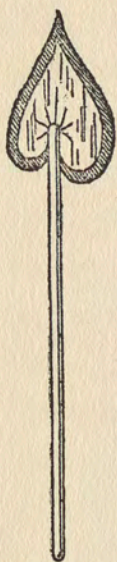


FIG. 1.

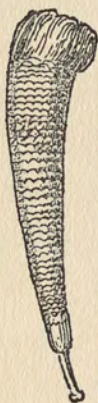


FIG. 3.

fans were mostly made of feathers. Some are merely a bunch of peacock feathers in a handle (Fig. 2); others are more elaborately combined in feather mosaic (Fig. 3).

The resplendent colours of the plumage of birds must have given great delight to the first artistic instincts of mankind. Not less ingenious are the fans of different coloured grasses and reeds, wrought into shapes somewhat similar to a leaf (Fig. 4). From its very beginning the primitive artist thus exerted his imagination to adorn the fan; while the most remote literary reminiscences of the time when in the mind of mankind royalty and divinity were one, show how much the first poets were impressed by this symbol of authority. Later, fans were made of such precious materials as ivory, tortoise-shell, or sandalwood, and finally of paper and other fabrics.



FIG. 2.

The Indian name for fan, punkah, was also given to the huge fan or frame covered with stuffs and worked by slaves. This ingenious ventilator is generally considered of modern invention, but it, also, has a claim to high antiquity. On the bas-reliefs of the ruins of Koyundjik were found proofs that the Assyrians three thousand years ago had contrived to refresh the air by artificial breezes.

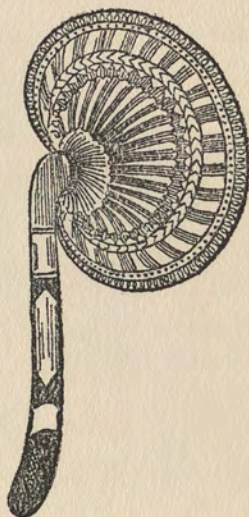


FIG. 4.

Guez de Balzac, during the reign of Louis XIV., wrote of enormous fans in Italy suspended from the ceilings and worked by four servants. "I have a fan that makes wind enough in my chamber to wreck a ship." In 1791 they were introduced into the English residences of the East Indies, and have since been adopted there in all public places.

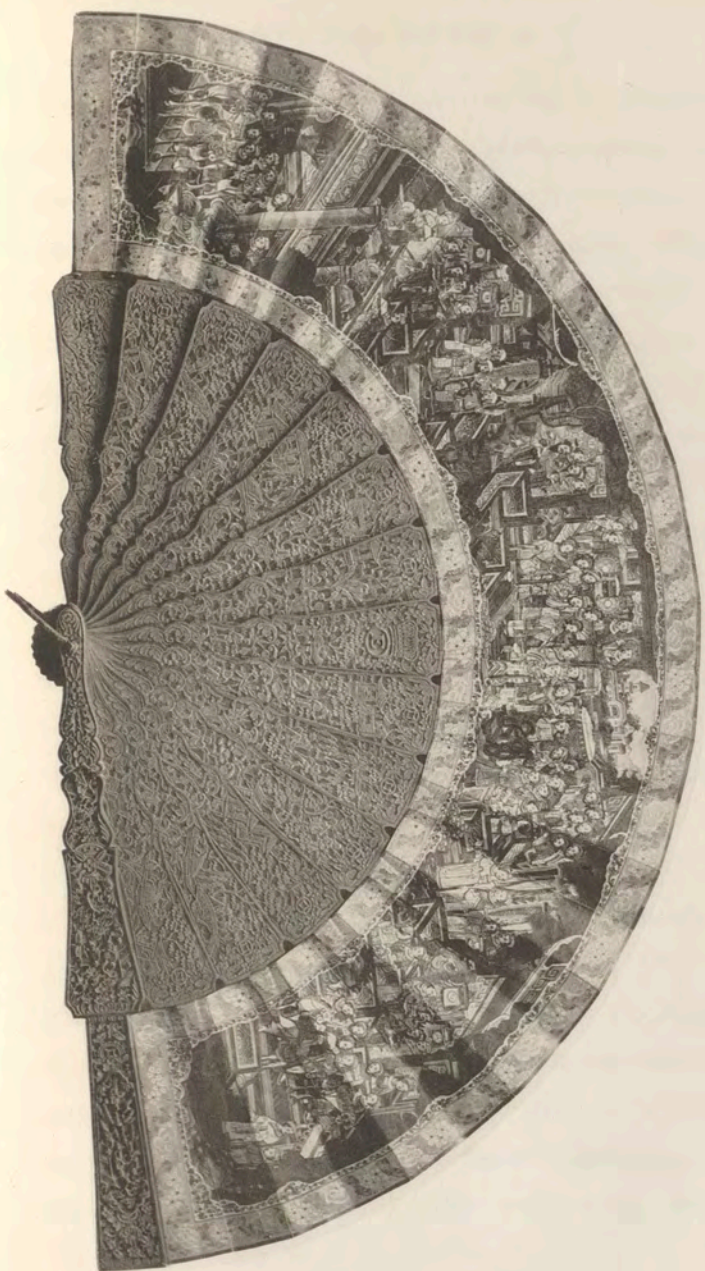
An implement used in ancient times for winnowing is mentioned under the name of fan in



the Holy Scriptures: Isaiah xxx. 24, Jeremiah cxv. 27, and Matthew iii. 12.

A bulky monograph would be necessary to describe the transformation of the fan in China and Japan from a bamboo leaf to a marvel of workmanship. The fan has an important place in the annals of these countries from the sixth century to our time, and the subject is interesting and intricate enough for the erudition of a scholar.

"A Child's Guide to Knowledge" (in Chinese) tells that the fan was invented by the Emperor Aseim Yuan, who came to the throne in the year 2699 B.C. Other writers, in accordance with a piece of poetry by Lo-ki, defer its invention to the time of the Emperor Wee-wang, the first ruler of the Chow Dynasty, 1106 B.C. Tcheon-li, in a work of the eleventh century before our era, describes fans of pheasant feathers used as ceremonial objects in royal interments. The general custom of using fans dates back to the sixth century of our era. The poet Thou-fou in "The Song of Autumn" mentions feather fans in the shape of a pheasant's tail as in royal use.



CHINESE, painted leaf and carved sandalwood sticks. Owned by the EMPRESS EUGÉNIE.





The folding fan is supposed to be a Japanese invention of the seventh or eighth century A.D., and their God of Happiness is represented with one in his hand. Whether it originated, according to tradition, by a sovereign's observation of the wings of a bat, or was suggested by the natural unfolding of the palm-tree leaf, must be left to conjecture. Some Chinese writers mention the introduction of folding fans in the year 960 A.D.

The bamboo, the palm-tree leaf, wood, leather, paper, metal, were the materials used for the fan until the introduction of various fabrics and silks. Round, square, octagon, and elliptic fan-screens were from the remotest times adorned with embroideries, beads, curious designs, and inscriptions.

The artists of the Celestial Empire were probably the originators of caligraphic and pictorial decorations on fans. The Negroni Collection, sold in London in 1866, included many of the famous Album Fans so long and so greatly popular in China. Some of these fans were sold for £900 apiece. They were richly ornamented



and covered with amorous and complimentary inscriptions, and were supposed to have belonged to the emperors and empresses of China. The first fan of this sort of which we have particular mention in Chinese poetry was that of the Princess Pan, A.D. 550. The princess was for a time the favourite of the Emperor Chi'eng Si of the Ham Dynasty. Finding her star on the wane, she sent him a circular fan on which she had written verses describing herself as an Autumn or neglected Fan. Ever since in China a neglected wife is called an Autumn Fan.

In Japan there is a special kind of fan for every usage; as the court fan, the kitchen or water fan, the fan to be used as bellows, the dancing fan, the tea fan, the war fan, and so forth. Each variety is an interesting subject of study, both as regards the customs and the industrial achievements of the country. The war fan as used in ancient times was made of leather, with an iron handle of considerable length and weight. It served to give directions to the army, and also was a formidable weapon. Some of them had blades of metal, and thus were useful

as shields. Autograph fans, album fans, fans with maps and advertisements, almost every kind of souvenir fan with views and scenes of daily life, originated in China or Japan.

Both in ancient and modern times important fans have been embellished by the leading artists, poets, and calligraphers of their countries. This is attested by their wonderful carvings in ivory, shell, mother-of-pearl, and various kinds of precious wood, and by their works in fine metal inlaid with gold and silver. Not less admirable are the textures and embroideries. The figures are sometimes wrought in silk embroidery, the faces carved in ivory. The fans on which mica is applied in powder or in flakes have a most brilliant glistening effect, while some are entirely in the inimitable Chinese lacquer decorated with beaten gold and silver.

The subjects of the paintings applied to fan decoration are most generous in their variety, whether suggested by the endless pictures copied from nature, or created by the marvellous imagination of the artist. Sprays of grass, supple wreaths of flowers, insects, or birds, the play of fantastic



curves and lines,—all have the living motion and truth obtained by an attentive observation of nature. The exuberance of the artists' imagination in representing fantastic animals, curious figures, mythological gods, is surprising and charming. Their methods of grouping lines, of seizing combinations of glowing colours, are delightful and instructive lessons. We can also easily appreciate their keen sense of the humorous, while the symbolism of their subjects is not always obvious to those who have not studied the social and religious history of these countries. Precious material and labour have at all times been lavished on these works of art, which are handed down from one generation to another with all the reverence for what is old which characterizes the East.

In China and Japan the common Buddhist influence makes the artistic productions of the two countries very similar, and deepens the general impression that art in Japan is merely an imitation of Chinese creations. The Japanese fans are in many respects superior to the Chinese; and the taste of the Japanese artists, the greatest

decorators in the world, is more refined by an ardent and close study of nature.

In both these countries the practical uses of the fan are similar. It is an indispensable weapon against the swarms of insects and the heat of the climate. This explains its endless varieties of form, and its importance in the historic life of the people. We know by the record of their customs that the fan is not, as it is with us, a mere appendage of feminine costume. Prince and nobleman, priest and sage, the soldier, the labourer, the mistress, the maid, even little children, carry the fan both for the sake of coolness and also for ceremonial purposes, observing strictly the etiquette of its usages in accordance with an established code. The fan has become a part of the national costume and life. It is used for salutation in the street; mothers wave it to make their babies sleep, while labourers work with one hand and fan themselves with the other. Soldiers are not above carrying fans, and generals use them to direct actions.

The ways in which Japanese beauties avail



themselves of the fan are various and at the same time so similar to those of our young ladies that it is not necessary to describe them in detail. We learn, however, that under the irresistible influence of Western manners the observance of proper etiquette as to their handling commences to be disregarded. Although the custom of carrying fans is not diminished, critics inform us that high art in Japan has entered the period of decline in this branch as in others, since constant communication with Europe has been established. Fans decorated with the utmost delicacy of artistic feeling for the use of noble ladies grow scarce; the demand for those worked in precious metals has almost died out; while cheaper productions, on the other hand, provide the whole civilized world with useful and still elegant specimens, produced at prices with which no other nation can compete. The manufacture of commonplace articles is thus encouraged by the growing demand, but the artist is inevitably sacrificed.

In ancient Egypt the fan was a royal emblem of authority, happiness, and repose. The fan or

flabellum bearer, generally of royal birth, held dignified service about the person of the monarch, and was inducted into office with great ceremony, as we can see by the silent testimony of painting and sculpture. The fan-bearers of

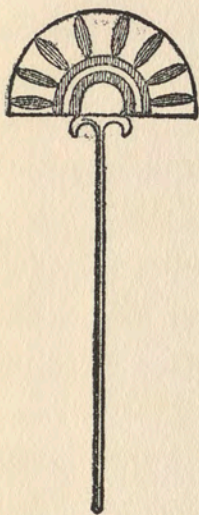


FIG. 5.

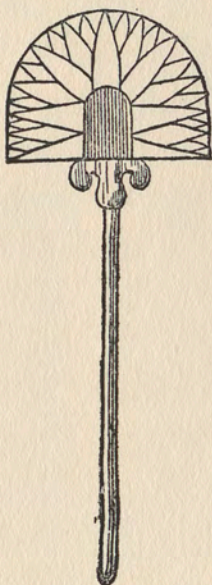


FIG. 6.

Rameses the Great, thirteen hundred years B.C., are represented in the frescoes which adorn the Palace of Medinet-Abou at Thebes as twenty-three sons of the Pharaoh, each carrying a semi-circular screen attached to a long handle or staff



(Fig. 5). More elaborate are the designs of the screens on the frescoes representing the Triumph of Horus (Fig. 6).

The Museum of Boulak has a flabellum of the same epoch (1657 B.C.). The wood is pierced all around with holes, in which the ostrich plumes were set, and still bears traces of gilding and rough carving. Artists and poets inspired by Cleopatra always represent the beautiful sovereign of Egypt surrounded by those standards of ostrich feathers which added splendour to every religious and secular pageant.

Upon Assyrian sculptures also is traced a page of the history of the fan. The British Museum has a slab of the reign of Assur-Nissapal, king of Assyria, 880-860 B.C., representing attendants fanning the monarch. On another bas-relief at Nimroud a slave is waving a fan to cool the liquid in a vase.

According to Xenophon, and the descriptions by some explorers of the bas-reliefs of Persepolis, the Persians and Medes considered the fan, the flyflap, and the parasol as royal attributes.

In the first centuries of our era the Arabs

adopted the use of the fan and soon gave it the poetical, sentimental, and sarcastic character of the script fan of the Chinese. In the "Thousand and One Nights" the youth, who was half flesh, half monumental marble, tells that he was fanned while awaiting his wife's return. Abou-Hassan, in the "Sleeper Awakened," is fanned by seven beautiful women. From these records it is concluded that the fan must have been in general use by women at the time when these fantastic stories were composed.

The fan was a symbol of authority in Mexico before the Spanish conquest. Ometeuctli, the God of Paradise of the Tolteques, and Totec, the military disciple of the founder of the Mexican monarchy, were represented holding a flabellum of feathers in their hands. Contemporaries of Cortez relate in their writings that costly flyflaps of feathers with handles encrusted with precious stones, named *tleoatzehuaquetzalli*, were given as diplomatic presents. In the Hawaiian Islands, from the most ancient times to the present day, costly kahilis or flyflaps have been the especial insignia of royal authority.



The fan reached Greece from Asia Minor, probably through commercial intercourse with the Phœnicians and Phrygians. Greek vases show women in graceful positions holding leaves consecrated to Venus. Whenever these leaves have a triangular form, they may be considered, according to Winckelmann, as the first fans in imitation of leaves. The Greek ladies, however, had always a preference for fans of peacock feathers, the peacock, as the bird of Juno, being the symbol of refinement, splendour, and luxury. Euripides alluded undoubtedly to a fan of this kind, when in "Orestes" the Phrygian slave pronounces the words, "I fanned Helen's cheeks and airy curls with a winged fan of round and graceful shape."

Etruscan artists carried the improvement of the peacock fan to its highest perfection. The importance attached to the fan in Southern Italy is attested by Virgil, Ovid, Longinus, Lucullus, Propertius,—Homer and Anacreon being the only authors who do not refer in their writings to the flabellum.

As the aspirations of the Romans tended

chiefly towards military conquests, the development of art industry which enriches the life of peace-loving nations was never successfully attempted. The fan underwent, therefore, no noticeable improvement during the Roman Empire, but was used, as by earlier nations, to heighten the pomp and splendour of their festivals. At ceremonial banquets slaves stood behind the guests, waving enormous fans painted in brilliant colours, or of peacock and ostrich feathers of graduated length, in the shape of a disk or a half-circle. No patrician went out without her fan-bearer, called "flabellifer," carrying a fan which was attached to a long handle, so that no high-born lady could be suspected of ever fanning herself. At the same time a smaller kind of scented wood or ivory (*tabella*) were used by the gallants to fan ladies, if we may judge from Ovid's words ("Amorum," Liber III., *Elegia 2*):—

"Wouldst thou invite the gentle air meanwhile,  
Which, moving in my hand, this tablet makes?"

From a symbol of royalty the fan had gradually become a necessary appendage of the rich



and high born. The custom, however, coming down from the most ancient times, of applying it to liturgic rites in keeping alive the sacred fire, or in offering sacrifices, survived and was adapted to the ceremonies of the first Christian Church. Abbé Martigny, author of the Dictionary of Christian Antiquities, speaks of Syrian monks as employing their time in making fans, and presumes that St. Jerome in the desert of Chalcis, and St. Fulgence, bishop of Ruspina, wrought upon fans for the service of the altar. From the first centuries of Christianity they were considered necessary to the celebration of the holy mysteries, both in giving the officiating priest relief from the heat, and in driving the flies from the Eucharistic bread and wine. In the "Coutumes de Cluny" is found the following mention: "Flabellum factum de serico et auro ad repellendos muscos et immunda," proving that the custom was adopted by the Latin Church.

These flabella were of feathers, palm leaves, or fine parchment. Those used in the Greek Church were fastened to a wooden staff, or had the shape of a cherub with six wings, while those of the

Maronites and Armenians were circular, covered with strips of metal, and bordered with little bells. Rare specimens of this kind are still in existence. One of them is a flabellum from the Abbey of St. Filibert de Turnus; another, said to be of the fifteenth century, belonging formerly to the Charset collection, at the recent sale of the Spitzer collection brought the price of \$5020. The oldest fan of the kind used in religious ceremonies was long supposed to be of the sixth century, and to have belonged to Theodolinda, Queen of the Lombards, the pious friend of St. Gregory. This fan is now considered to be of the tenth or eleventh century, and is preserved in the Cathedral of Monza near Milan, where it is an object of superstition and pilgrimage with young peasants who wish to marry. It is of leather, folding upon itself like a screen, and is decorated with gilding and with almost obliterated Latin inscriptions.

When the use of wine in the Holy Communion was discontinued, about the fourteenth century, the flabellum ceased to be employed in the communion celebration, but remained an impressive



feature in public solemnities. During the time of Gregory VII., it was carried in grand religious processions, but only waved when the Pope sat still, his action when he moved being supposed sufficient to scatter the evil spirits. The flabellum is said to be still in use in the Greek and Armenian church ceremonies.

Writers differ somewhat about the time when the fan became in France "that engine of magic charms," the origin of which poets have sought both in Eden and Olympus. About the fourteenth century it must have been in general use, as various court inventories mention it under the name of *esmouchoir*.

Miniatures of the same time represent ladies with long-handled round fans, made of feathers or rice-straw, similar to those still made in Tunis and Algiers. The inventory of Charles V. of France, made in 1380, contains the mention of a folding fan, made of ivory with an ebony handle, and bearing the arms of France and Navarre. It is from the same source that we learn that the Roman custom of employing servants to fan the king when at table, still prevailed at that time.

The fan soon came to be considered an indispensable part of the costume of high-born dames, and reflected the costliness of their dress. Gold and silver laces, brilliant feathers, elaborate embroideries, and all that the jeweller of the day could contrive, was expended on this trinket. Queen Eleanore's fan, as described by Brantôme in his "*Vies des Dames Illustres*" (1590), was inlaid with precious stones. Another presented by Queen Marguerite to Queen Louise of Lorraine surpassed all that are mentioned of that time in beauty and costliness; its value of 1200 crowns has been estimated to represent about \$5000 in our day.

Catharine de Medicis brought the Italian round screen fan into France. This innovation, manufactured and sold by perfumers who had followed the queen to France, was greatly appreciated. When the luxurious Florentine became a widow, she manifested her grief and her divorce from the world by surrounding her personal device or emblem with broken mirrors, plumes, and fans. Henri III., says Pierre de l'Estoile, found the fan as indispensable as any beauty of his



time. The fan which the king used could be unfurled by a single motion of the hand, was large enough to protect his delicate complexion from the ardour of the sun, and was carried even when going to the chase. Another writer of this period relates that fans were used in winter as well, to screen ladies from the heat of the fire.

Among the verses which from that time extol the fan in French poetry, we must at least give a few lines, among the most beautiful of the earlier ones, written by Remy Belleau in 1572:—

“Ne pensez ce présent nouveau  
Estre fait de plumes d’oiseau ;  
Amour, de ses plumes légères  
L’a fait pour ne voler jamais,  
Laissant en vos mains désormais  
Toutes ses ailes prisonnières,”

and which may be rendered:—

“Think not that my late gift is but a feather  
Plucked of a bird! Love, of his lightest plumes  
(That ne’er shall fly again) bound it together—  
Your hands henceforth imprison all his wings.”

The fashion of carrying fans was adopted in Italy, Spain, and Portugal at about the same

time as in France, feather and skin screens, the latter much esteemed for their strong perfume, being used and exported until the Japanese and Chinese pleated fan was introduced into Europe about 1590. Ladies of rank in Milan, Florence, Naples, or Padua, according to records of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, wore feather fans in which sometimes a little mirror was set. The workmanship of the handles was as elaborate as that of the gold and silver chains by which they were suspended. A curious fan known as the flag, key, or weather-vane, is well known by the painting called "Titian's Wife," in the Dresden Gallery. It was carried by the married women, and for a time was in great favour in Venice and Padua. The same fan, but of a dazzling white, was worn by betrothed girls. The only specimen now known to exist is in the collection of Madame Achille Jubinal. It is made of parchment, cut into open work, and trimmed with Venetian lace of the sixteenth century.



FIG. 7.



The earliest records of the fan in England date from 1307. In the inventory of Isabella of France, daughter of Philippe le Bel, who became queen of England as the wife of Edward II., mention is made of "*Duo flagella pro muscis fugandis.*" During the reign of Henry VIII. two styles of fans were in use, one for full dress, the other for walking. The latter was very large, with a handle half a yard long, and served also as a parasol to shelter the bearer from the heat of the sun. Queen Mary received among her gifts on New Year's Day, 1556, "seven fannes to keep the hete of the fyer, of strawe thon [the one] of white silk." Queen Elizabeth favoured the custom that a fan should be the only present which a sovereign should receive from her subjects. The twenty-seven fans enumerated in the inventory of her wardrobe at her death in 1660 may thus be considered as so many offerings made by her courtiers. Sir Francis Drake gave her one of white and red feathers, the gold handle enamelled with a half moon enriched with diamonds and pearls, forming a jewelled frame for a portrait of herself. Another gift was of swansdown with

a maze of green velvet embroidered with pearls, rubies, and emeralds; the handle in the shape of a golden monster with head and breast of mother-of-pearl. One of the Royal Vestal's fans is said to have been valued at £400—an enormous price for that time. Leicester's present to her is described as of white feathers, the gold handle, thickly jewelled, bearing a lion rampant with a muzzled white bear beneath his foot. On New Year's Day, 1579, she received a gift of "two fannes of straw wrought with silke of sundry colors." In a portrait of Elizabeth upon a map of England painted about 1592, she wears a fan of the modern shape hung from her waist by pink ribbons; and another at Gorhambury shows her holding a fan of extremely small size.

Shakespeare mentions the fan in many of his immortal lines. It appears in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," in "Othello," in "Love's Labour's Lost," in "Macbeth," in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in "Antony and Cleopatra," and in "The Taming of the Shrew"—quite often enough to prove that the "Virgin Queen" had not the exclusive use of this "sceptre and shield of beauty."



Gosson, in his "Pleasant Quippes for Upstart Gentlewomen," 1598, remarks:—

"Were fannes and flappes of feather fond  
To flit away the frisking flies,  
As tails of mare that hangs on ground  
When heat of summer doth arise,  
The wit of woman we might praise,  
For finding out so great an ease.  
But seeing they are still in hand,  
In house, in field, in church, in street,  
In summer, winter, water, land,  
In colde, in heate, in dry, in weet,  
I judge they are for wives such tooles  
As bables are in playes for fooles."

Even in burly England fans were not given over exclusively to feminine use. Evidences of this abound in the writings of that time: for instance, Hall's "Satires" (1598) describe dandies chalking their faces and peering into glasses, "Tir'd with pinn'd ruffs and fans." In 1617 Green wrote: "We strive to be accounted womanish by keeping of beauty, by curling of hair, by plumes of feathers in our hands which in war our ancestors wore on their heads." Shakespeare alludes to this effeminate fashion as "those remnants of fool and feather that they have got

from France." Sir Edward Coke, Lord Chief Justice, is said to have used a rod or wand with a huge fan while on circuit, and the Earl of Manchester also had one. Aubrey mentions them in his notes on the fashions in the early part of the seventeenth century. "The gentlemen had prodigious fans and they had handles at least half a yard long, with these their daughters were oftentimes corrected."

Anne of Denmark, wife of James First of England, is portrayed with the enormous artificial hips which were formed by the grotesque farthingale. Upon one hip rests the long handle of a feather fan, the end rising over her shoulder quite in the manner of an antique flabellum. In another portrait we see her holding a fan in the shape of a bird's wing, resembling much the common household utensil with which Italian peasants, to this day, fan the fire.

Henceforth the use of fans spread rapidly throughout Europe, and although the chief seat of their manufacture was always in France, towards the latter half of the seventeenth century there was a considerable trade established in



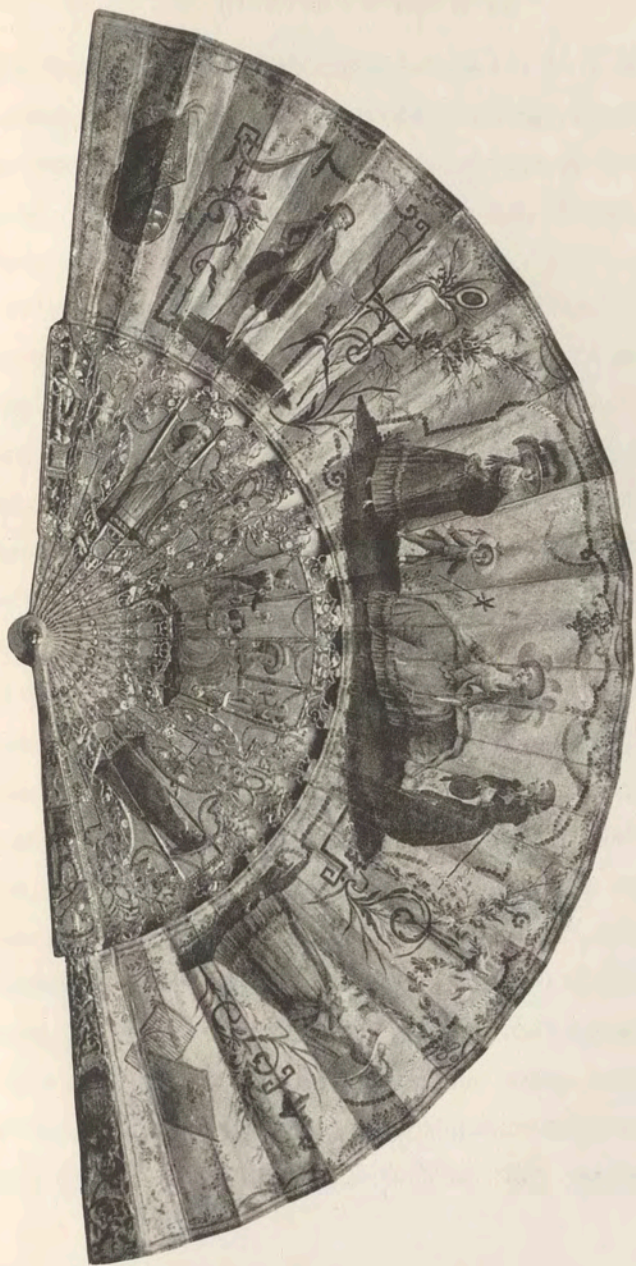
England. Mr. Redgrave, in his catalogue of the loan collection at South Kensington in 1870, mentions a petition to the House of Commons, entitled "The Fann-makers' grievance, by the importation of Fanns from the East Indies." "That the manufactures of Fanns and Fann-sticks, though it may seem slight to some, is certainly at this time of very great consequence to a very considerable branch of the trade of England, for that it employs multitudes of men, women, and children, in making the sticks, papers, leathers, in ordering the silk (which paper, leather, and silk is manufactur'd in this nation); likewise great numbers employ'd in painting, varnishing, and japanning; and further until there be put a stop to the importation of Indian Fanns and Fann-sticks, of which it can be proved that 550,000 have lately been brought over, great numbers of poor people, continually employed in the work, must otherwise inevitably perish." As a result of this, in the twelfth year of Charles II.'s reign a protective duty of forty shillings a dozen was placed upon imported fans; and if they were painted, their importation was forbidden. After

the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, many French fan-makers sought refuge in London, and introduced their industry there. Under Queen Anne, however, the London manufacturers obtained a charter of incorporation, and thereafter the trade of fans within the city was limited to members of the corporation.

In the early part of the eighteenth century the fan was generally in use among ladies of the middle classes. The *London Magazine*, in 1744, mentions fans two feet wide, and the writer remarks that by using them "a lady will soon screen herself and her family against all the inclemencies of the weather." In the *Spectator*, Addison wrote his well-known and amusing satire: "Women are armed with fans as men with swords, and sometimes do more execution with them. To the end, therefore, that ladies may be entire mistresses of the weapon which they bear, I have erected an Academy for the training up of young women in the exercise of the fan, according to the most fashionable airs and motions that are now practised at court. The ladies who carry fans under me are exercised by the following



words of command: Handle your fans, Unfurl your fans, Discharge your fans, Ground your fans, Recover your fans, Flutter your fans. By the right observation of the few plain words of command, a woman of tolerable genius who will apply herself diligently to her exercise for the space of but one year shall be able to give her fan all the graces that can possibly enter into that modish little machine." He continues: "There is an infinite variety of motions to be made use of in the flutter of a fan. There is the angry flutter, the modern flutter, the modest flutter, the timorous flutter, the merry flutter, and the amorous flutter. There is scarce any emotion in the mind which does not produce a suitable agitation in the fan — insomuch that if I only see the fan of a disciplined lady, I know well whether she laughs, frowns, or blushes. I have seen a fan so very angry that it would have been dangerous for the absent lover who provoked it to have come within the wind of it; and at other times so languishing, that I have been glad, for the lady's sake, that the lover was at a certain distance from it." In Addison's day the cost of



GEORGE III. Owned by MRS. PINCHOT.





this "modish little machine" was not a little matter. Did not Sir Roger de Coverley consider the profits of a windmill none too large to be set apart for the fans of the future Lady de Coverley?

We can scarcely imagine the rouged and powdered beauty of the eighteenth century without this fascinating trinket in her hand. Both in England and in France it had gradually become the mirror of the life and pleasures of the time. Political and social events, literature, music, the fashions and follies of the day, were depicted upon them. When "Gulliver's Travels" appeared, all its principal events were represented on fans. Some were covered with words and bars from operas or with scenes from popular plays; others bore the rules of various games within decorative borders of playing-cards. There were calendar fans, fortune-telling fans, fans with riddles, charades, programmes, political and social caricatures. The large and remarkable collection of Lady Charlotte Schreiber contains many records of that period, as royal marriages, christenings and deaths, the Peninsular War, the agitation



caused by the Excise Bill, the separation of America from England, etc. "Malbrouck s'en va-t'en guerre," caricatures upon the bad manners of the time, counsels of the "Lady's Adviser, Physician and Moralist," are some of the humorous subjects of her collection. Ladies contrived even to improve the service of the Church by the use of the fan, making it appropriate by covering it with portraits of popular preachers, verses and illustrations from the Bible.

Quaint fans of these various kinds are found in great numbers in many collections, whereas really good artistic specimens of English manufacture are rare. The fan records the social and intellectual influences which have produced it; indeed, it almost defines what the artistic productions of a nation were at a given period. In England the enjoyments and refinements which commerce and trade alone cannot give, have been sought but recently in art, and the lack of artistic merit in their early fan production is therefore not surprising. But if English artists have not contributed in a great measure to beautify this "modish trifle," we owe to English poets the most charming

verses upon the theme. Gay, in his beautiful poem, "The Fan," invokes the Muses:—

"Assist, ye Nine! Your loftiest notes employ—  
Say what celestial skill contrived the toy—  
Say how the instrument of love began:  
And in immortal strains display the Fan."

To give here some of the many passages referring to the fan by Shakespeare, Pope, Cowper, would be a pleasant task, but space allows us only to quote a few lines from the "Art of Dancing" by Soame Jenyn:—

"What daring Bard shall e'er to tell attempt  
The powers that in this little engine dwell?  
What verse can e'er explain its various parts,  
Its num'rous uses, motions, charms and arts?  
Its shake triumphant, its virtuous clap,  
Its angry flutter, and its wanton tap."

To trace the artistic evolution of the modern fan, our attention is inevitably turned to France, where the labours of skilled workmen, directed by artists of talent, soon brought industrial art to a high degree of perfection and gradually led the surrounding countries to recognize in her the acknowledged arbiter of taste. In this particular branch the English poet Gay, already



quoted, renders her graceful homage in the following lines: —

“Gay France shall make the fan her artists’ care,  
And with the costly trinket arm the fair.”

In the time of Henri IV. the folding fan was in general use. A body of workmen called themselves Fan-makers, and claimed of his Majesty the exclusive right of manufacture; while dealers as well as other corporations of artisans opposed their pretension to the rank of a distinct corporation. These hostilities prevailed during the reign of Louis XIII. and

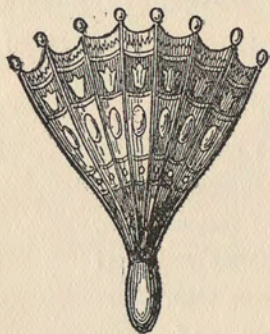


FIG. 8.

prejudiced the development of this industry. The rights of the existing corporation were abolished in 1664, but only for a short time, as in 1678 Louis XIV. restored them, and further confirmed the establishment of a Fan-maker's Guild. In the time of Louis XIII. the fan opened to a full half-circle, and the suppleness of silk and vellum

allowed the most elaborate and delicate decorations, as we can see by a rare specimen from that time, in the collection of Madame Achille Jubinal, which, as regards composition and treatment, is of the highest order. The subject represents the king, Louis XIII., playing at hide-and-seek with the four quarters of the globe.

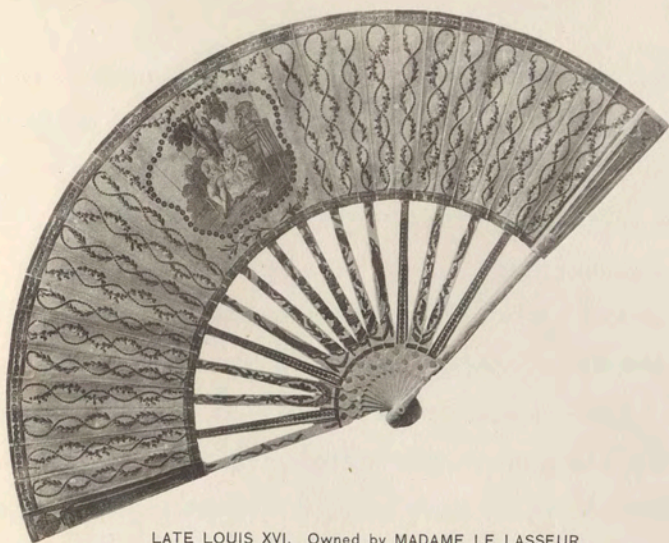
D'Alembert, in his "Reflections and Anecdotes of Christina, Queen of Sweden," relates that the haughty and irascible daughter of Gustavus Adolphus was at the Court of Louis XIV. when the fashion of wearing fans became general. Some ladies of rank not knowing the aversion of the sovereign for everything pertaining to female attire, asked her if they should adopt the fashion of carrying fans even in winter. The queen of Sweden replied to this politeness by her wonted rudeness. "I do not think so—you have airs enough without them." M. Blondel remarks that the French ladies revenged themselves for this gratuitous insult by deciding to carry the fan in all seasons. During the reign of Louis XIV. fan decoration was carried on with the princely munificence that characterizes



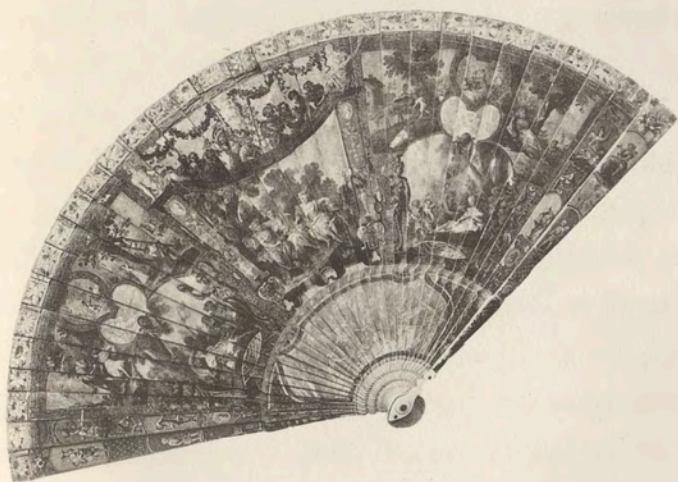
this epoch. After the commercial distress caused by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the wars in 1696 and 1707 was over, the fan trade revived again, to achieve its highest development, both in an artistic and a commercial point of view. The export of cheap fans, according to the commercial records of that time, was considerable.

Scenes and whims of polite society, or events of the day, were represented on these, which were inexpensive. The different styles enumerated as in use in England were either directly imported or were adopted from French ideas and designs by French workmen who had found a refuge there. Ivory, mother-of-pearl, tortoise-shell, were elaborately carved, enriched with silver, gold, and enamel, and set with precious stones to frame paintings by artists of renown. Some fans of that time are attributed to Charles Lebrun, Philippe de Champaigne, Mignard, and Lemoine.

The lorgnette fan of the same period had open spaces between the decorations, in which glasses were inserted, enabling the ladies to see all they wished without betraying an undignified curi-



LATE LOUIS XVI. Owned by MADAME LE LASSEUR.



LOUIS XIV. VERNIS MARTIN. Owned by H. M. QUEEN VICTORIA.





osity. Some of them were provided at the rivet with an imperceptible lorgnette to further extend the view.

Another variety, called "éventail brisé," belonging to the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV., was manufactured after imported Chinese models of lacquered wood and metals. The overlapping blades of wood, bone, shell, ivory or mother-of-pearl, of which they consisted, held together by a narrow ribbon, were decorated with paintings or cut in fret work and engraved.

Fan decoration of this time and during the first part of the reign of Louis XV. was greatly improved by the celebrated "verniss Martin." An ingenious coach painter of that name had succeeded in discovering a varnish which equalled the translucent, enamel-like varnish of China and Japan. It is supposed that he was skilled in all the decorations then lavished upon carriage panels, and that he probably applied his talent to fan decoration as painters engaged in the same profession often did. Mr. Redgrave holds that Martin only varnished the fans, while others believe that he collaborated with painters from



the Low Countries and with French artists, — all of them unknown except Huet, who painted the centre pieces with exquisite finish and brilliancy of colour. Novel compositions, particularly suitable for the decoration of the éventail brisé, are noted on some of the vernis Martin fans. One now in the collection of the Countess Duchatel is particularly interesting, as having been mentioned in one of the letters of Madame de Sévigné to her daughter, Madame de Grignan. This fan is of ivory, decorated with a charming painting representing Madame de Montespan as Venus, surrounded by nymphs assisting at her toilet. An interesting specimen belongs to her Majesty, the queen of England. It is to be regretted that the inventor did not transmit his secret to his pupils or assistants, as they failed in attempting to continue his method, which was so renowned that even Voltaire mentions it: —

“courant de belle en belle,  
Sous des lambris dorés et vernis par Martin.”

Fans, which had become gradually very large, grew smaller and more modest under Madame de Maintenon's reign, which seems to bear out one

writer's verdict that "they are really a scampish lot, huge for intrigues and flirtations, unnecessary for piety and devotion." Many anecdotes of the court life of that time could be given, but their essence is in the following verses by Merard Saint-Juste: —

"Dans les temps reculés, comme aux siècles où nous sommes,  
Les rois, le sceptre en main, commandèrent aux hommes  
L'éventail, plus puissant, commande même aux rois."

"In olden time, as in our present day,  
The sceptre in kings' hands o'er men held sway —  
Mightier the fan, which even kings obey!"

The remarkable productions of Chinese and Japanese workmanship which had been much appreciated since the seventeenth century, and imitated in England, Holland, and France, came in the eighteenth century into more general demand. An article of the "Encyclopédie Méthodique" on this art industry mentions that in the latter part of the eighteenth century the finest leaves were mounted on sticks imported from China. Many curious specimens show these combinations of French and Chinese workmanship. The French manufacture of sticks was evidently



greatly improved by the richness and delicacy of Chinese examples. Mr. Natalis Rondot, speaking of the carvings of the time of Louis XV., says that although they cannot properly be called works of art, they are most remarkable, and as regards taste and delicacy, have never been surpassed. The sticks, which were broad and overlapping during the reign of Louis XIV., gradually became narrower, spreading out separately instead of in a solid sheet, many of the designs forming medallions. The leaf, still of vellum, silk, or muslin, was divided into panels, intertwined with wreaths and studded with spangles. Patronized by royalty, as well as by the extravagance of princes and noblemen, marvellous carvings combined with painting by superior artists brought the fan to its utmost perfection. The great progress in this branch is also undoubtedly due to the influence of the celebrated Marquise de Pompadour, who protected art in all its branches, and this one particularly, to judge from the charming specimens that are supposed to have belonged to her.

There is little doubt that Raymond de Lafage, Stella, and later Boucher, Watteau, Lan-

cret, Greuze, and other great artists painted their charming pastorals, idyls, fêtes-champêtres, and Cupids sometimes on fans; but how many of the subjects attributed to their brush are authentic is a difficult matter even for eminent art critics to decide. Young, needy artists, skilful but unknown, led by the demand of fashion to imitate the style originated by artists of renown, have probably painted most of the fine specimens attributed to great painters.

Thoré, in one of his "Salons," says that Boucher, who improvised in a morning a dozen pastorals (for over-doors), rested himself sometimes by working on small gouache paintings so finely finished that the help of a microscope was needed for their details. Mr. Paul Mantz, describing the masterly treatment of a fan belonging to the collection of Dr. Pioget, now in the Kensington Museum, remarks that if Boucher ever painted a fan, it must be this one. In the Louvre Museum are two compositions by Raymond de Lafage. A fan signed by Watteau belonged to the Bruzard collection, numbering four hundred specimens, which was sold in 1861.



One of the most remarkable fans of this time, supposed to be of Italian origin, and now in the possession of Madame Achille Jubinal, once belonged to the Marquise de Pompadour. Only the leaf is preserved, and we can judge from it what the value of the handle must have been. It is divided into five sections, in each of which a miniature painting is inserted. The border is decorated with two rows of small medallions, the exquisite finish of which can only fully be appreciated through a magnifying glass.

Admiration for some of these marvellous fans must have suggested to Balzac the passage in "Cousin Pons," which all who have read this masterpiece will recollect with pleasure. "It is high time that having served vice, this fan should now be in the hands of virtue. It has taken a hundred years to bring about such a miracle. You may be sure that no royal princess has anything comparable to this treasure; for, unfortunately, human nature is so constituted that it will do more for a Madame de Pompadour than for a virtuous queen."

These fairy-like creations stir our sense of

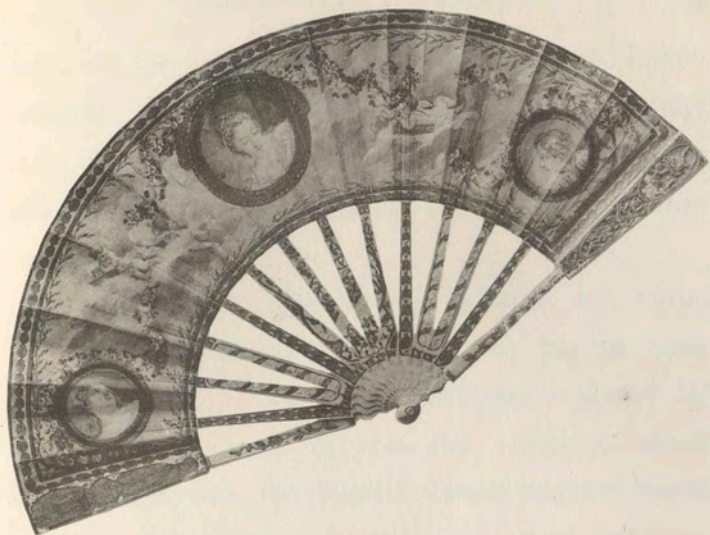
wonder and admiration for the ardent love of perfection in work which in olden times seemed not too dearly attained by spending the best part of a lifetime on a single object.

Specimens from the reign of Louis XVI. do not surpass in richness those just mentioned. But the reaction in art decorations from the style of Louis XV., which is more famous for its opulence than for its taste, had a favourable influence also on fan decoration. Many of the relics of the unfortunate Queen Marie Antoinette, now treasured with reverence in museums or private collections, show admirable workmanship. One of these, in the possession of Mr. Thiac, was presented by the city of Dieppe, always of high repute for its ivory carvings, as a congratulatory offering to the queen on the birth of the dauphin in 1785. It is of the style called *brisé*, consisting of ivory blades decorated with figures and ornaments designed by Vien; the carving is attributed to Le Flamand. Some fans of the same kind, presented by the queen to her friends as keepsakes, are preserved, one in the Louvre, others in private collections.

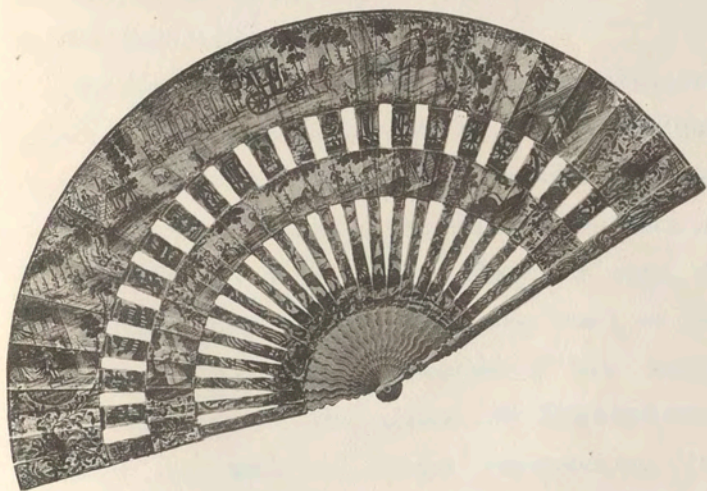


Cartouches, pastorals, cupids, emblems, graceful festoons and wreaths of flowers were delicately painted in gouache, mostly on silk and gauze. In some specimens the symmetric divisions of the leaf was avoided, to allow the painter greater freedom; in others, panels and medallions in the shape that characterizes the style of Louis XV. are maintained, interlaced by wreaths and enriched by spangles of divers colours. The pure Louis XVI. style needs to be looked for on specimens of value, the designing of which was entrusted to artists. Those fans whose only merit is to be antique are sometimes combinations of different styles, as in all inexpensive articles subject to the caprice of fashion. Thus in every period, when the fashions changed, the handles already in stock were more easily sold when mounted with leaves painted in the style of the new fashion. Sticks in the style of Louis XVI. were usually narrow, delicately carved and sometimes coloured to match the light material, the simpler and more delicate style of decoration.

A few exceptional fans were painted by some of the great artists of the time, but the greater



LOUIS XV. Painted by BOUCHER. Owned by DR, PIOGEY.



LOUIS XV., style called "CABRIOLET". Owned by the COMTESSE DE CHAMBRUN.





part of the many marriage-fans of the lovely daughter of Maria Theresa show that the gay and glittering effect of spangle decoration was the style which mostly appealed to the taste of the time.

A fan called *Cabriolet* or *éventail à galerie*, was then as much appreciated as in the time of Louis XV. The single leaf was replaced by two or three rows of material between which some space was left open. These narrow bands were usually decorated with allegorical, satirical, and comical subjects which reflected the light-hearted mood of society before the sombre days of the Revolution began.

The fan, adapting itself always to new exigencies, then appeared bearing devices, rather than decorations, in accordance with republican ideas—as figures of Liberty, triangles, the letters R. F., for *République Française*, Phrygian caps, or representing some event of the day, such as the Festival of Reason, or funerals of the clergy. The collection of the queen of England contains a fan with a design representing the National Assembly, and on the reverse of it is



a statistical account of the Fixed Revenue and Expenses of the year 1789. Ideal subjects being entirely abandoned, the ladies attempted for a time to preserve at least rich material for this inoffensive weapon. But the disappearance of allegories, rustic scenes, idyls, fêtes-champêtres, cupids, and roses did not sufficiently appease fierce patriots. Silk, gauze, and spangles were suspicious materials, being the last vestiges of the aristocratic taste; consequently they had to give way to coarse materials and paper, printed with devices such as "Mort ou Liberté" and "Vive la Nation"; or they were covered with assignats and portraits of popular men, — Mirabeau, Lepelletier, Marat, or Barras. Even tragic scenes were not considered inappropriate. The fan à la Marat represents Charlotte Corday carrying her fan in one hand while with the other she deals the citizen Marat his death blow. M. Vatel, in his writings on Charlotte Corday, says one of the witnesses at her trial maintained that she did not relinquish her fan when she stabbed Marat.

We see by the specimens in French and English

collections that the fan records almost every phase of this dark period, during which thousands of its makers had to join in the desperate cry of all the skilled workmen, "Je perds mon état, faites-moi vivre."

But the fan revived, spangled and scented, at the balls of the jeunesse dorée and the fêtes presided over by the beauties of the Republic, — Madame Tallien, Madame Beauharnais, Madame Récamier. At the beginning of our era the enthusiasm created by Napoleon's victories suggested the subjects. War trophies, casques, cannon, laurels, surrounded Bonaparte's portraits. A remarkable fan of this kind, engraved in aqua-tint and signed by three celebrated artists, Chaudet, Fontaine, and Percier, is in the possession of Count Liesville. The fan undergoing so many fluctuations in size, had become very small, particularly the éventail brisé, which, elaborately cut in fretwork, was much in favour. Madame de Genlis refers to this fashion of carrying small fans in her "Dictionnaire des Etiquettes": "In the time when women blushed, when they wished to hide their timidity they sheltered themselves behind large fans; now that they blush



no longer, that nothing intimidates them, they do not wish to screen their faces, and consequently they carry imperceptible fans."

Few fans of any artistic value were produced during the First Empire. They were still of small size, made of silk gauze and tulle, spangled and with applied designs, or of the kind called *brisé*. Some painters attempted to revive the taste for painted decorations. Fans in neo-grec style were the innovations of that period. One of the rare specimens of that kind is from the collection of the Countess of Shaftesbury. The prevailing lack of taste discouraged all efforts to bring this art industry to its former high standing, although in some instances the charm attached to the sceptre of feminine coquetry was as fully recognized as before. We need only to recall Madame Staël's appreciation of it in the following lines: "What graces does not a fan place at a woman's disposal if she only knows how to use it properly! It waves, it flutters, it closes, it expands, it is raised or lowered according to circumstances. Oh! I will wager that in all the paraphernalia of the loveliest and best-dressed woman in the world, there is

no ornament with which she can produce so great an effect."

In 1827, a protective duty in Spain and Austria checked the export of cheap fans. But the Restoration soon brought a revival of this industry. A journal, *Le Miroir* of 1821, mentions as one of the novelties the Anagram fan. The word *Roma*, for instance, was changed by a simple mechanism into *Amor*. The young men of fashion attempted to introduce fans at the theatre in imitation of Henry III. and his Mignons. This whim did not last, but may have been of service in calling the attention of ladies somewhat more to the use of the fan.

According to Mr. Charles Robin, the author of the "Illustrated History of the Exhibition of 1855," the interest for old fans was aroused by a ball given at the Tuileries in 1829, at which three quadrilles were danced in costume. The Duchesse de Berry, desirous to have fans suitable for the period of her Louis XV. quadrille, found beautiful specimens collected by a perfumer, Vanier. These long-forgotten and yellowing fans excited the admiration of the court ladies, and the caprice was soon imitated by thousands. In



order to supply the growing demand, beautiful specimens of the time of Louis XIV., Louis XV., and of Louis XVI. became types after which skilful painters and sculptors worked. Mr. Charles Robin, already mentioned, writes: "Like the caterpillar, which transforms itself into a butterfly, and in spring spreads its beautiful wings of enamel and ruby, so the fan, the butterfly of woman, began in the artistic spring of 1830 to undergo a metamorphosis and appeared clad in the richest and most harmonious colours. Mother-of-pearl, ivory, tortoise-shell, precious stones, the feathers of the humming-bird, sparkling crystals, the plumes of the ostrich, the gleam of enamel, the goldsmith's cunning craft, the fancies of the sculptor, the palette of the painter, in a word, all the opulence of nature, all the delicacy of art, contributed to perfect these admirable jewels which have become the sceptre and shield of beauty."

When we think of the disproportionate demand for old fans, we cannot but regret that during this later time artists of merit had to employ their talent in imitating, instead of creating, fans that

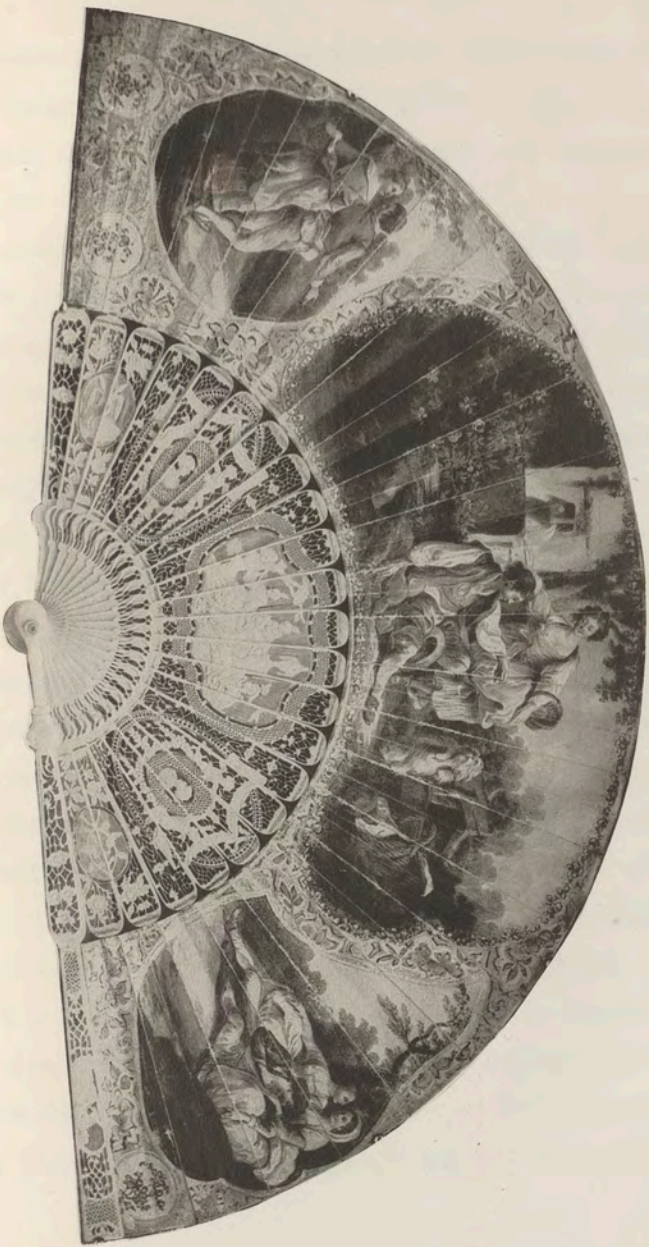
would represent a new phase of the art. Nobody ignores the importance given ever since to collecting the antique fans which have survived the injuries of time. Most of the French fans found in other countries had been sold at the call of poverty, or given as keepsakes by the aristocrats who had emigrated. But how many of those bought as antique fans are authentic would be difficult to decide.

It is a matter of great interest to us to know how our ancestors lived, how they dressed, what were their preferences, their tastes, and achievements. Again, the study of ancient specimens attracts all those who understand that it is not possible to work independently of the past. The experience of successful labour is the best guide in future attempts after originality in ornamentation, which, as Mr. Ruskin says, consists after all not in newness but in freshness. To secure a really valuable antique fan is, however, now very difficult; while the science of modern decorative art is improving rapidly. Colouring has never before reached greater perfection, and the earnest study of nature adds daily new resources



and varieties to the old experiences. It is evident that with all the faults and shortcomings of the present time there is no lack of artists able to renew the old style by breathing their fancies and spirit into it. Many modern artists have occasionally lent their talent to this branch of art: Ingres, Horace Vernet, Léon Coignet, Rosa Bonheur, H. Baron, Celestin Nanteuil, Eugène Lami, Corot, Gérôme, Vidal, Robert Fleury, Gendron, Hamon, Emil Wattier, Antigna, Français, Vibert, Leloir, Madeleine Lemaire, Edouard de Beaumont.

All the different old styles of fan are coming again into prominence. Those of ostrich feathers have perhaps never been made with choicer plumes than now. Lace fans in Chantilly, Duchesse, and Point à l'aiguille, sometimes with paintings inserted, are worked with marvellous skill; indeed, in viewing these fairy-like films, we may say with Spencer, "More subtle web Arachne cannot spin." But it saddens the heart to think of the painful labour entailed upon those patient workers whose cheeks grow pale and wan while their entire life is absorbed in making such achievements possible.



LOUIS XV. Painted by BOUCHER. Owned by the late MRS. ASTOR.





In contemplating a painted fan, on the contrary, we judge from the pleasure it gives us what the delight of the painter must have been in designing it.

Landscapes and flowers, even in pictorial art, were painted in a conventional way down to the beginning of our era. But since the love of natural scenery has been aroused by such poets and writers as Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, Tennyson, George Sand, and Victor Hugo, a school of landscape and flower painting has arisen to meet this new feeling for nature. Flowers are now one of the most pleasing themes for pictorial illustrations and enter to a great extent into modern fan decoration, especially on account of the opportunities they give of displaying beautiful colouring. In the old fans, flowers were mostly arranged symmetrically and introduced as accessories, while in the typical modern fan they are the principal motive, thrown into graceful intricate groups in which a secret balance is nevertheless preserved. Confusion as means of decoration is employed with great success in designing fans; for, as Boileau says, "A fine disorder is often an effect of art." The



first artistic fans, decorated with flowers, which were exhibited at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1855, were painted with exquisite delicacy and freshness by the celebrated flower-painter, M. Reignier.

The chief modern productions are also of infinite variety. Every kind of ancient invention is renewed; as the feather-fan, the perfume-fan, the pocket-fan, folding in two by a simple mechanism, the bouquet-fan, pleated in circular shape when open, and folding into a hollow space when closed. In recent years a new combination has been made by dividing the leaf into panels by placing four or six of the blades on the surface of the leaf. The carving and engraving of the handle is prolonged on these blades which frame the design, interrupting it in a pleasing way. On some fans all the sticks, carved and spangled, extend on the surface, forming thus the sole ornamentation. The length of the blades from the rivet to the upper line of the mount or leaf gives the fan a stiff appearance, however, which accounts for the short success of this novelty, notwithstanding its rich effect.

A special mention must be given to the screen-

fan. Its shape and material have undergone many changes, but in the main it is much like the original implement in use before the pleated one was invented. Besides those which are square, octagonal, round, or oval, shapes in the styles of Louis XIII., Louis XIV., Louis XV., and Louis XVI. are designed in every possible material.

After the time of the Restoration the manufacture of the blades was gradually transferred from Paris to the department of Oise. Only those of tortoise-shell are still worked in Paris. Among the living sculptors and carvers of renown are Jorel, Dourain, A. Baude, Bastard-Lanoy, and J. Vaillant. The richness and delicacy of their designs and execution are of the highest order.

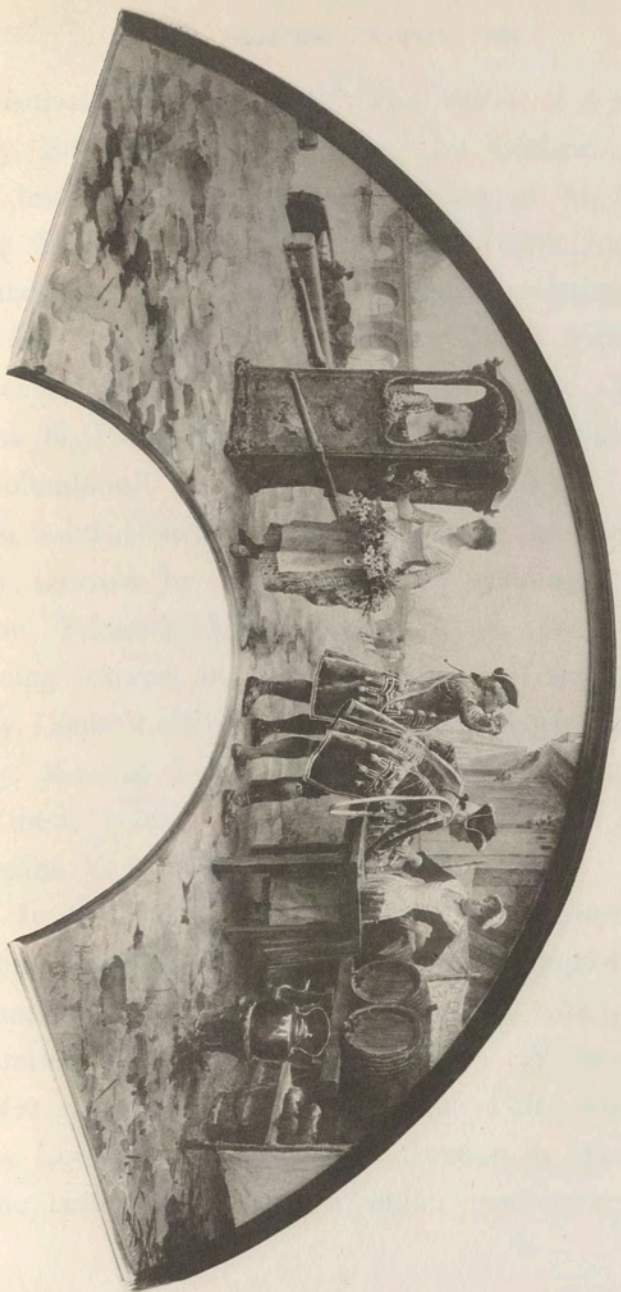
As already mentioned, silk and gauze were largely used for fans during the reign of Louis XVI., and almost exclusively through the Directory and the Empire. Vellum, the only endurable material and therefore indispensable for paintings of great value, came into demand again during the Restoration, but could not easily be procured. In former times it was imported from



Italy, where the best method of preparing this supple material was gradually lost. At last, in our own time, the naturalist M. Drevon, encouraged by M. Desrochers, one of the leading fan manufacturers, succeeded in finding again the secret of making vellum even more flexible and translucent than in ancient times.

The fan exhibition at the South Kensington Museum in 1870, numbered 413 antique and modern specimens. Art critics were unanimous in declaring that the latter stood the test of comparison with the best examples of the old work. To give an encouragement to this industry, Queen Victoria was pleased to offer a prize of £400 for the best fan exhibited.

In order to be convinced that the modern fan has an equal right to our admiration, we need only look through the list of masterpieces of which space allows only the mention of a few: "Arab Dance," by Horace Vernet; "The Good Mother," by Trayer; "Diana and Endymion," by Ingres; "Un Repas à la Campagne," by Diaz; a mythological allegory by Léon Coignet; "A Month of Love," by de Beaumont; "Village



MODERN MOUNT. Painted by MAURICE LELOIR. Owned by MRS. CORNELIUS VANDERBILT.





Festival," by Veyrassat; "The Toilet of Venus," by Ed. Moreau; "A Fête," by Gérôme. On a leaf belonging to the collection of M. Carra de Vaux three masterpieces are combined: a landscape by Français, a figure painting by Vidal, and one by Ed. Moreau. "A Venetian Scene," by Eugène Lami, belongs to the Countess of Paris; the "Wedding of Harlequin and Columbine," by Rossi, was painted for M. Ph. de Saint-Albin; the wedding fan of the Duchess of Orleans, by Roqueplan; the wedding fan of the Princess Mercedes, by Lami, the sticks being carved by Jules Vaillant. "Temptation," by Louis Leloir, "A Scene under Louis XIV.," by Maurice Leloir, and a Japanese subject by Vibert, belong to the collection of Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt.

It is certainly not for want of appreciation that Northern nations have not attempted fan manufacture, but rather because of the more limited opportunity for their use. *Nature and Art* mentions the Order of the Fan instituted by Louisa Ulrica, queen of Sweden in 1744, for the ladies of her court, which gentlemen were



afterwards allowed to join. This seems another proof that the fan is always attractive and indispensable to women, even in countries where they are less necessary to cool the air than to carry on gentle warfare. There are specimens which have been manufactured in Germany, Switzerland, and almost every country, some of them by French refugees.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries fans were manufactured to a large extent in Italy. A few rare examples give evidence that prominent Italian painters have also occasionally decorated fans. One painted by the celebrated painter Romanelli, the subject representing the rape of the Sabines, belongs to the collection of Madame Achille Jubinal.

From the time of the ancient screens of feathers and scented leather, fans have been made in Spain. Quilliet, in his Dictionary of Spanish painters, relates an anecdote according to which in the latter part of the seventeenth century, Cano de Arevalo, a Spanish painter, made a fortune by painting fans which he sold as French productions. He was, however, duly rewarded for

his beautiful work, by being made court painter to the queen. The old preference for expensive French fans, however, always prevailed, and special styles to suit the Spanish market were manufactured in France. At present fans are manufactured in Spain mostly to supply the home demand and to suit the national taste. They are easily distinguished from French fans by their large size, strong material, and high tone of colouring. The subjects are almost invariably scenes and customs of the country.

But if Spain is not remarkable for their manufacture, it is beyond all question the country where the beautiful señoras and señoritas excel in the pretty manœuvre, "manejo del abanico," and where the mania for fans is considered, as in France, an extravagance which testifies to good taste. "A Spanish lady with her fan," says Disraeli in "Contarini Fleming," "might shame the tactics of a troop of horse. Now she unfurls it with the slow pomp and conscious elegance of the bird of Juno, now she flutters it with all the languor of the listless beauty, now with all the liveliness of a vivacious one. Now in the midst of a very tor-



nado she closes it with a whirr, which makes you start. Pop! In the midst of your confusion, Dolores taps you on the elbow; you turn round to listen, and Catalina pokes you in your side. Magical instrument! In this land it speaks a particular language, and gallantry requires no other mode to express its most subtle conceits or its most unreasonable demands than this delicate machine."

French literature, both of ancient and modern times, abounds in beautiful passages referring to the fan. To give only the most interesting would make a charming volume. Here is a quotation from Lemierre:—

"Dans les chaleurs extrêmes,  
Heureux d'amuser vos loisirs,  
Je saurai près de vous appeler les zéphirs;  
Les amours y viendront d'eux-mêmes."

It is, as Arnault remarks, maliciously, so perfect that the royal hand of the Count de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII., deigned to inscribe the lines on the blade of a queen's fan, allowing his courtiers to attribute the authorship to him.

Queen Victoria, the empress of Russia, and

ex-Queen Isabella of Spain have remarkable collections of fans; the last named is said to number six hundred specimens. The Countess of Paris, the Countess of Chambrun, Mme. A. Jubinal, M. Thiac, M. de Saint-Albin, the Countess of Granville, Mme. Alphonse de Rothschild, Lady Lindsay, Lady Charlotte Schreiber, and Lady Shaftesbury have some of the finest specimens in their possession. Interesting specimens of Chinese and Japanese workmanship are found in some of the collections of Oriental treasures.

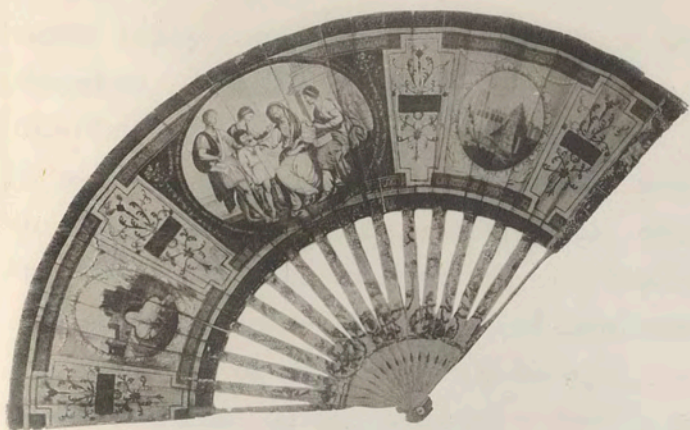
We have noted in a rapid way the changes which this charming toy has undergone, showing how it has recorded, more or less completely, the customs, ideas, and preferences of successive generations, hoping thus to bring fan decoration into notice at a time when this country, arrived at prosperity, can rest from the nervous hurry of work and seek to develop the knowledge and love of the beautiful.

In compiling these few pages I venture to say, as Montaigne in his essays, "I have gathered a mass of diverse flowers, giving of my own only the thread to bind them together." Great

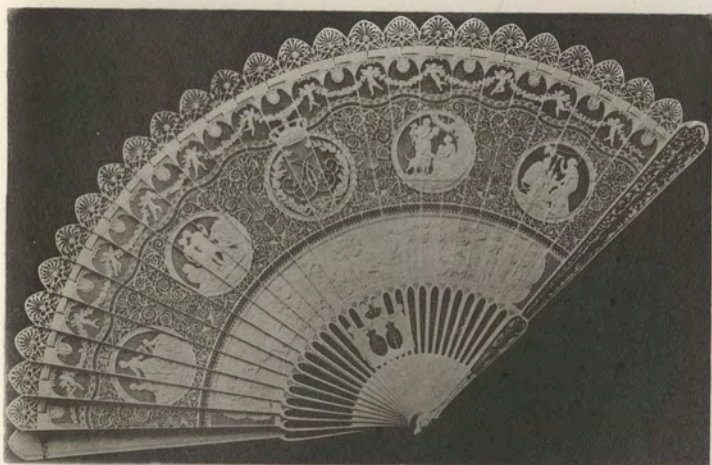


as may be the shortcomings of this attempt, only one thing would sadly disappoint me, and that is, if my modest effort should not induce at least a few artists or amateurs to try this charming occupation. It is one especially suitable for those who, in hours of leisurely employment, take pleasure in seeing their work develop into a thing of beauty. However interesting the study of past relics may be, it cannot have the charm of encouraging original efforts or of combining new designs. The arbitrary demand for old fans cannot be but disheartening to fan-decorators. In times gone by artisans, encouraged by royalty and the nobility, worked at their own leisure, contented with little, inspired as they were by the pure love of perfection. How much more in the present struggle for life is the patronage of lovers of beauty needed to stimulate the new endeavours in this delicate branch of art!

In Japan the fan is considered the emblem of life; as the rays of the fan spread out from the rivet, so the road of life widens into a happy future. With us it is the emblem of pleasure, treasured as the precious souvenir of



DIRECTORY OR EMPIRE. Owned by THE COUNTESS OF SHAFTESBURY.



MODERN: COPENHAGEN, 1863. A WEDDING FAN OF THE PRINCESS OF WALES.





some happy day, the date of which is never forgotten. For this reason a fan is chosen for the first gift to a young girl entering life. At a wedding it is always an interesting feature to see the collection of artistic fans offered to the bride. The Princess May of Teck, on her marriage, received forty, many of them charming specimens of taste and workmanship.

After giving all the admiration that is due to fans that are the work of artists, it is perhaps not needless to suggest that the work of an amateur has also its charm. Princess Mathilde presented a fan of her own work to the Empress Eugénie. The Princess Louise, the Prince of Reuss, Madame de Nadaillac, and many other art amateurs have worked on fans with the conviction that they are equally precious, whether signed by a great artist or painted by a dearly beloved hand.



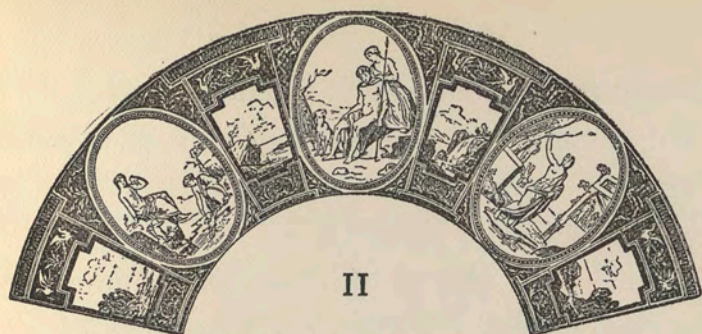


## II

### FAN PAINTING







## II

### FAN PAINTING

*Here shall the pencil bid its colors flow,  
And make a miniature creation grow;*

\* \* \* \* \*

*So shall the fair her idle hand employ.*

—GAY.

THE aim of this part of the work is to give information to those who may desire to acquire knowledge of the technicalities of fan painting. Suggestions are also made concerning the choice of subject, treatment, composition, and colouring, without aspiring higher than simply to direct the attention of amateurs to this line of art and to awaken interest for it. Those who have already acquired some intelligence and culture in art matters will easily supply the incompleteness, perhaps insufficiency, of this little book. Amateur painters, people who wish to select their fans with discernment, as well as those who take



pleasure merely in judging such decorative work with fairness, will here find some starting-points which may help them to a more thorough investigation of the subject.

The use of fans is universal, and naturally by far the greatest number will always be of the kind which have no artistic value whatever. But it is time that the wide-spread opinion which places the beautiful art of fan decoration on the same level with millinery work should be corrected. Fan painting is regarded by some persons with a degree of contempt which is hardly imaginable by those who are devoting to it true artistic gifts. In the popular conception it is but another of the attempts of young ladies to spend their idle moments,—a thing not worthy to occupy the attention of educated painters. How many able artists in France, courageously avowing to themselves that it is not given to them to succeed in the higher branches, have contentedly accepted a more modest distinction in this department of decorative art, considering that a not unworthy occupation which even great painters have occasionally practised.

A fan decorator will not have any difficulty in finding an attractive subject, unless it be the embarrassment arising from abundance of material. The chief source of his inspiration will always be nature. In fan decoration the greatest freedom of treatment is admitted, every manner of handling from the closest imitation to the most conventional interpretation being appropriate. A lace fan or one decorated with embroidery or spangles requires a conventional design. The symmetry of it may be absolute—that is to say, composed of devices rigourously similar, disposed inversely on either side of an imaginary line—or else it may be in relative symmetry. Conventional designs may also be effectively combined with faithful reproductions of nature.

It must be observed here that a close imitation of nature does not in art constitute the highest excellency. Many subjects which strike us as beautiful in nature disappoint us when imitated, however conscientiously, for decorative purposes. The object of decoration being to excite the eye agreeably, an imaginative, fanciful treatment gives keener enjoyment than the most accurate design.



The emphasis of picturesque parts, idealization of form and colour, effective light and shade, are sometimes attained in art only by partial sacrifice of truth. This liberty of rearranging nature, so as to give æsthetic pleasure to the spectator, is taken by all professional painters; but amateurs are often unaware that artists have the same license that poets have to indulge their fancies. In study from nature the most conscientious imitation is the only means by which correctness of the eye can be attained. An attempt to generalize must first be made when the student is far enough advanced to do decorative painting. Professional decorators imitate nature closely only when nature happens to be agreeable, and they will subordinate truth to the general effect whenever it is required.

If the chosen subject be an historical one, the embellishments derived from costumes and local scenery are a great resource. Subjects from mythology, poetry, or allegory, allow even greater liberty in enriching the design.

The whole range of ancient and modern history and of anecdote lies open for the purpose

of decorating fans. Figures of all sorts, Cupids, emblems with flowers, ornaments, and landscapes can be arranged in the most attractive manner. Flowers are a distinctly modern decoration with us, being presumably suggested by Japanese examples. We must acknowledge here that many of the best principles of our modern decorative art are due to Japanese influence. The incomparable value of their methods is incontestable; but the servile copying of the art of another race, with different instincts and habits than ours, ought not to be encouraged. Without a close imitation of the Japanese manner the most charming compositions can be made with hawthorn, apple-blossoms, roses, violets, lilacs, or indeed with any wild flowers and grasses. Flowers have their own language to express youth, maturity, age, splendour, pride, purity, modesty. Almost any human characteristic is attributed to them. Beetles, butterflies, wasps, dragon-flies, and especially birds, either grouped with blossoms and grasses or flying about in picturesque confusion over the entire surface, make charming decorations. Ample opportunity for the display of brill-



iant colouring and a most beautiful intricacy of lines are given by all these subjects.

One cannot but be fascinated by the charm of the antique fans of which specimens have already been given; and it is only by studying the works of others that one can avoid mistakes, shorten labour, and learn to think. The services rendered by intelligent collectors to all branches of art-industry cannot be enough appreciated. The artists who strive most earnestly to renew their art need to look back on the beautiful examples of past times, in order to inspire themselves with the energy and patience required to work out a new idea.

But, while we admire the old models of good taste and cherish priceless relics, we must not forget that beauty is a thing of the present as well as of the past. It is an eternal influence; it is constantly, though insensibly, at work, renewing and forming the taste of present and future generations.

The antique fan need not, therefore, be more than a starting-point. The individual tastes and the originality of our time should not be dis-

couraged and suppressed by the rather exaggerated antiquarian interest of to-day, which is liable to weaken the appreciation of what is both new and good. An old fan selected in the shop of a dealer, or secured at one of the many sales of collections, may be a beautiful curiosity, but nothing more; it cannot have the charm of a souvenir or of an heirloom. The fan designed by an artist contemporary with the owner is the only one of which the future generation of young ladies may say, as Ninette in Austin Dobson's verse,

"I swear upon this fan,  
My grandmother's!"

Notwithstanding the abundance and variety of artistic material and the liberty of treatment allowed, the proper arrangement of masses and lines, in order to form an effective whole, requires some effort of imagination. The art of composing cannot be acquired by rule. Yet every one possesses in some degree this gift, and the means whereby the student may develop



it should not be disregarded. The most valuable lessons in this regard, as in most others, have been learned from the combinations of nature. The sea, the clouds, the mountains, the trees and flowers, are so beautifully grouped that we naturally desire in a composition an equally agreeable assemblage of objects; and the artist will follow the natural law of grouping. Still more, in imitation of nature, the unity and continuity of a composition require the repetition of these groups and lines, which, though similar to one another, are infinitely varied in form and size. These recurrences are to the eye as pleasing and restful as the varied repetition of a theme in a musical composition is charming to the ear. And, although every one of the component parts of nature has some interest, there is always one dominant feature which, by its beauty or particular interest, captivates at first sight the attention of the spectator. The subordinate groups or objects will then first attract the eye in proportion to their relative value as regards the whole.

In a good composition the spectator should

perceive at once the principal motive of the arrangement. Portions that have particular interest or beauty must therefore hold the prominent places, and should be accentuated by subordinate masses or forms which sustain the effect and give repose to the eye. Thus, whether the design is composed of figures or flowers, one group must be made dominant, and the other subordinate, not abruptly, but by gradual and almost insensible changes. Every possible variation in size and form should be introduced so as to avoid monotony, and to give to the groups the spontaneous and accidental look of nature.

The good general form of the entire composition can only be obtained by unaffected simplicity and by maintaining an artfully concealed order in the most complicated treatment. To exclude tameness or a commonplace appearance from a composition, some sweeping lines are effective. The serpentine line is in itself more beautiful than a straight one, and a round or oval form than a square. But, in order to give firmness and steadiness to a composition, all varieties of lines must



be combined. The vertical needs to be balanced by the horizontal, oblique lines by transverse obliques; long lines by short, large objects by a multitude of small parts. All these and others are not only necessary for harmony, but become beautiful from their contrasts when they are rightly mingled. In a good composition one side is never filled out to the overbalancing of the other; but to equalize the design so as to avoid the appearance of incompleteness, it is often enough to add only an insignificant object.

The intelligent selection or judicious grouping which gives the proper effects of light and shade, as well as an agreeable disposition of colours, are seldom attained without some alterations which the material of the mount will not allow. The beginner will therefore find it very helpful to sketch the arrangement first on a sheet of paper, which permits him to perfect it gradually. After a little practice it is so attractive an occupation to harmonize and balance the component parts of a composition that time spent in this way will not be regretted; and, when the composition is completed, the student may

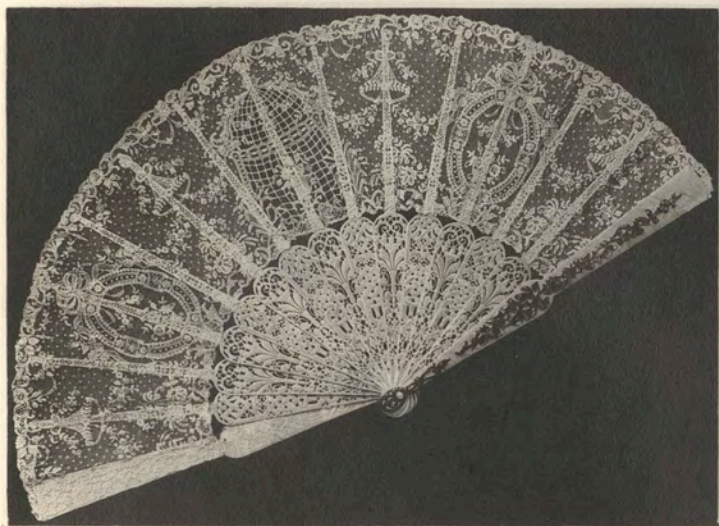
commence the delightful work of adorning it with all the treasures of his palette.

A fan should captivate at first sight. This can most easily be effected by securing brightness of light and colour, even at the sacrifice of other qualities. Brilliant colour alone has greater charm than form, especially in the decorative arts. Our strong feeling for colour is possibly a result of our constant contact with nature. The soothing blue of the sky, the cheering green of the fields, the flowers of a thousand hues in the open air, seen in full sunlight without any heavy, dark shadows, have unconsciously formed our taste for fresh and tender tints which charm and lull to reverie. It has been said that drawing is the masculine part of art, while colour is the feminine. If so, it would account for the facility with which a fan that is beautifully coloured, though it may not have any other particular merit, will conquer admiration. In order to illuminate the composition most generously, the larger part of it must be occupied by masses of brilliant light and colour. Dark masses should be avoided.

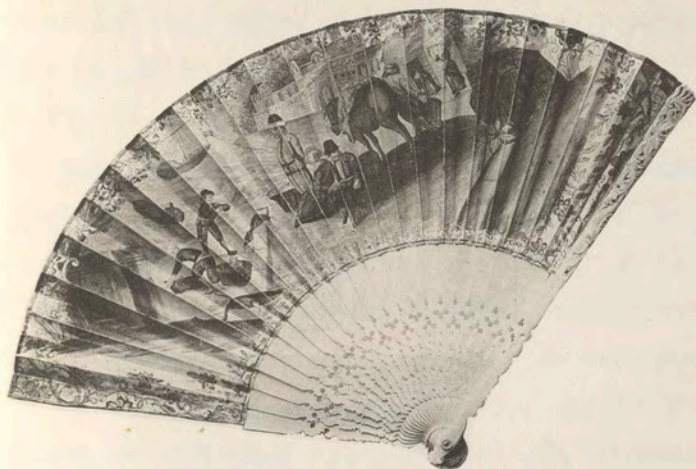


All great colourists seem to have found it necessary to use shadows very sparingly, and sometimes even to sacrifice them entirely to the brightness of light. High relief can easily be obtained by deep shadows. But nothing is gained, for instance, by making a figure look as if it were stepping out of its place, when completeness of form may be obtained by subtle gradation. The open-air school that has won such general acceptance has entirely upset the old theories as to certain necessary proportions of light and shadows. Wonderful instruction may be drawn from the examples of modern masters, who give the effect of roundness and relief by shadows which do not sink below a half-tone.

Whatever the distribution of light may be, the same rule as that for the arrangement of masses must be observed in regard to it; and this applies also to shadow and colour. Two masses of equal intensity ought not to be allowed to distract attention. This does not at all prevent the balancing of one part of the composition with another by means of repetition



White lace with mother-of-pearl sticks. Owned by the EMPRESS EUGENIE.



EARLY XVIIIth CENTURY. DUTCH. Owned by MRS. F. R. JONES.





of the light in a less degree. A generous though judicious diffusion of light, as already mentioned, is necessary for the general effect; yet it should be remembered that a decoration is marred either by too much light or too little. And as the light, so must the colours of the composition be repeated with some difference in quality and strength. Accordingly, if the principal colour is yellow, it must be carried over into other parts of the composition by judicious touches. If the colour is blue, unity demands that it should be repeated by reflections of the same cool tint. Every principal tint should be recalled in a similar way.

The greatest possible variety within the limits of harmony can be obtained by well-managed gradations. Every touch of colour should vary, though almost imperceptibly, in strength or tint. White, for instance, should be quite brilliant only where a prominent light or relief is necessary. In the other parts the white colour can be graduated into all the delicate hues of mother-of-pearl. Pink may be yellowish, melting into purple or grayish-pink, the absolutely pure colour being



used with much reserve in order to produce effect. Blue may be fused into greenish-blue, green into purple with a greenish tinge; and thus a delicate play of colour, light, and shade may be continually introduced, especially in large masses.

Ruskin, speaking of gradation of colour, says, "You will find in practice that brilliancy of hue and vigour of light, and even the aspect of transparency in shade, are essentially dependent on that character alone, hardness, coldness, and opacity resulting far more from equality of colour than from nature of colour." It is, however, indispensable to have the general tone pleasing and the individual colours pure and rich. Tints that are crude and gaudy or too strong bear the same relation to colouring as shrill and noisy sounds to harmony. Rude nations and children feel strongly excited by loud music or garish colours, but to more cultivated senses they are not pleasing. Exact rules in regard to the desirable quality of tints in painting cannot be given, for their effect is entirely dependent on the tints which surround them. As dissonances in music

have the power of heightening the enjoyment of musical tones, so can colours in themselves disagreeable be made pleasing by their contrast to others. Such tints are sometimes even indispensable in producing a certain required effect.

Regarded from an art point of view, the primary colours, those which cannot be obtained by admixtures, are red, blue, and yellow; and for the practical purposes of painting this old theory is generally referred to. Maxwell's theory, scientifically correct, gives the primary colours as red, blue, and green. Prof. O. N. Rood's excellent book on Colour may be very profitably used, the author being both a scientific authority of the first rank and a practical water colourist. The presence of the primary colours, not necessarily in their purity, but in combination with each other, constitutes perfect harmony. Green is the complementary colour of red, because, being a combination of blue and yellow, it completes with red the presence of all three. So are blue and orange, purple and yellow, and all compound colours which contain the primary colours complementary to each other. The proportions may



vary infinitely; but for the purpose of the painter one colour should be chosen as the dominant note, and the others employed sparingly, so as not to rival the principal tint, but merely to complete the whole scale, thus satisfying the craving of the eye for the triad of colours. Painting in a single shade, or monochrome, is, however, very effective. The tint which is used to strengthen, as well as that of the shadows, must be skilfully gradated if we wish to avoid uniformity of colour. This permits us to introduce the complementary colours to some extent. Thus "grisaille," which is a painting in gray with the light in white, needs touches of warm brown in the shadows in proportion to the quality of cold tints used in the lighter parts.

The small space of this work prevents my doing more than allude to the theories of colour-harmony. These, as given in the best of the merely theoretical treatises on the subject, can teach but very little, and are sometimes misleading to those who have not yet adopted some principle for their personal guidance in the art of colouring. Rules may be formulated for the relative quantity of warm

and cold tints and for their proper disposition, as observed by great painters of times both past and present; and beautiful results have been produced in accordance with rule, yet such rules are not essential in obtaining harmony. They may be entirely disregarded, as some of our great modern colourists have proved. Their novel and delightful harmonies in light blue, rose, violet, gray, or green, enlivened and sufficiently balanced by small quantities of soft warm tints, are refreshing to those who have a sensitive appreciation of this ethereal, almost immaterial manner of painting.

Does it appear to any of my readers that we are looking too high for art-principles when our object is only the painting of a fan? Surely, it is not to be presumed that those who take an interest in fan painting lack ambition to do their best in a modest way! The great artist will be the last one to blame them for looking to his example for instruction. Still better than by any theory or examples, the constant study of nature, and especially of flowers in the open air, the assiduous contemplation of the morning and even-



ing sky, will reveal to the earnest student the secret of harmonizing even the so-called discordant colours. The innumerable intermediate tints by which it can be done, the charming effects produced by contrast of the colours which improve one another to the utmost, are found at every step in nature. When colour is generously lavished, without apparent rule, details and even the design remain unnoticed, the spectator being entranced by a delightful colour sensation.

We sometimes hear colour considered as the merely sensuous element of art. It is a strange error. When beauty of form does not also express a sentiment, it addresses itself equally to the mere sense of sight, and not to the mind. The splendid and lavish diffusion of colour throughout nature may well seem to have a higher aim than merely to procure sensuous enjoyment. Artistic judgment, quick perception, refined taste, all those elements which constitute culture, are conveyed to the mind by the study of colour. The peculiar character of each of the colours and certain combinations of them express almost every emotion of the soul—purity, repose,

gayety, passion, sadness, or solemnity—just as powerfully as form or any other resource of art. The true artist will never be unjust to the soul of beauty inherent in colour.

In the manufacture of fans the principal parts are the handle, consisting of the blades or sticks, and the mount, or leaf. The total size of the modern fan is from ten to thirteen inches in length, of which the handle is four to eight, and the leaf five to eight inches. When the blades which form the handle are broad, they number fourteen, when narrow and delicate, sixteen to eighteen, and are riveted together at the base. They are called “brins” in French, and the outermost of the blades, which are broad and protect the leaf when the fan is closed, are termed in French “panaches,” and in English guards. The European manufacture of sticks is at present almost entirely monopolized by France. Ivory, mother-of-pearl, tortoise shell, sandal-wood, ebony, bone, and lacquered wood are the principal material in use for the handle of fans. Some are richly inlaid with gold, silver, and spangles, others decorated with delicate carving, engraving, or open work. The guards are



sometimes set with precious stones or enriched with diamond monograms. The handle sets off the painting of the leaf to its best advantage, just as a suitable frame for a picture enhances its beauty without interfering with it. The manufacture of the sticks has been greatly improved by new processes, so that most beautifully finished work can be obtained at very low prices; and in the matter of artistic carving the modern workmanship fully equals that of ancient fans. Many carvers of great ability give some of their time to this branch of art; others devote themselves entirely to it, each one having a specialty.

The leaf, cut in the form of a segment of a circle, is always painted before being mounted.

Vellum or skin, Japanese paper, satin, silks of all kinds were for a long time the only material used. About twelve years ago the gauze fan came into fashion again; and ever since that time gauze, crêpe, and almost transparent silk have been in great favour, as painting has a most charming effect on these airy backgrounds.

Directions have often been given for sizing

material which has not the stiffness necessary to allow the fan to be properly mounted; but in a few cases only are these directions of any practical value. The material which professional fan painters use is sized in factories for the purpose. As already mentioned in the preface, the Society of Decorative Art offers American painters an opportunity to procure the same kind of material. When the decoration is done on crêpe or gauze, the segment of a circle is cut out of a board and the material secured upon it by means of thumb-tacks. For silk and vellum an ordinary drawing-board may be used.

A skilful draughtsman can draw the design on the material with a fine brush. Those who wish to transfer the composition will find that their best way is to trace the design with a pencil through tracing paper. The outline thus obtained is pricked with a fine needle. The tracing is then placed on the material stretched on the board. A tampoon, dipped in charcoal powder when the material is light, or in chalk when it is dark, is passed over the holes. This line



is followed with a fine brush dipped in Chinese white or in a neutral tint. Transparent material, as gauze and crêpe, can be put on the design, and traced through.

Vellum admits of less alteration and "repentance" under the artists' hands than any other surface. It is painted with transparent or semi-transparent water colours, which requires readiness of hand and mind. The somewhat greasy surface must be lightly rubbed before the painting is commenced by means of a tampoon dipped in finely powdered pumice stone, or washed over with water in which acetic acid, white vinegar, or alcohol, has been mixed. When the surface is to receive broad washes, it must be stretched on a board in the same manner as water-colour paper. A very resisting kind of Japanese paper is used for painting fans entirely with transparent water colour in broad washes. Silk, satin, crêpe, and gauze are painted in "gouache," or body colour, which is just the opposite thing to transparent water colour. While in water colour the light is to come from the paper, in gouache it is to be

obtained by mixing opaque white paint instead of water with the colours, in order to make them paler. Gouache painting is very harmonious, transparent, and soft; and the mist of extreme distance can be exquisitely rendered while force may be retained. In every respect it is one of the best methods of attaining truth in the representation of nature; but, though gouache is somewhat easier than water colour, it must be remembered that no method of painting whatever admits of altering without losing some of the freshness of the tints.

Very likely it is superfluous to recommend a palette of water colours. Most of those who wish to make an attempt in fan painting are probably conversant with the necessary materials, and have already their preferences; for there is no great difference whether the painting is done on paper or on some other fabric.

The following colours are considered quite safe as regards permanence, and are relied upon by painters who take care to avoid fugitive tints: Chinese white, ivory black, burnt sienna, Van Dyck brown, yellow ochre, chrome lemon, chrome



yellow, maple yellow, Indian yellow, light cadmium, orange cadmium, vermilion, carmine, Madder lake, Veronese green, sap green, emerald green, cobalt, French ultramarine, Prussian blue. According to the experience and the habit of the painter a great many solid colours can be added with advantage to the above-described palette. Some artists prefer a complex palette, others a limited one, relying upon their own skill for more effectual combinations than those of the greatest number of prepared colours. Professional fan painters buy the principal gouache colours already prepared or in powder, and dissolve them in water with just enough gum arabic to make the colour adhere. A very small addition of glycerine prevents their drying too quickly in the cups. Self-prepared colours are inexpensive, and can be recommended for economical reasons to those who paint continually. All water colours may be used in combination with gouache. Many artists use exclusively their water-colour palette mixed with Chinese white to give the necessary solidity. Water colours are bought in pans or tubes, and the latter would be the best if it were

not that with time some of these colours harden in the tubes and cannot be expelled.

Bronze and silver are much used in fan decorations. Conventional designs shaded and outlined in gold or silver are effective. When bronze is only used to relieve the general effect, the touches must be put on sparingly. It is needless to say that real gold is used in exceptional cases only. Bronze for ordinary decoration is bought prepared or in powder. A very little gum arabic mixed with water will make it adhere to the material.

Wooden fans, although at present not in fashion and rarely seen, even as souvenir fans, can be charmingly decorated by the ordinary process of either oil painting or opaque water colour. The only difference from painting on canvas or paper is that the various kinds of wood will absorb more or less of the coating of paint. In order to avoid the possibility of a greasy outline when the painting is done in oil on certain kinds of wood a medium called the Adolphi process, which absorbs the oil, should be mixed with the paint. Many painters prefer the effect of



an unvarnished painting; others bring it to a high lustre by applying one or more coatings of varnish.

Some ancient ivory fans are admirably decorated with miniature paintings. The exquisitely smooth surface of ivory is particularly adapted to this style of painting, done in transparent water colour, with a slight addition of gum arabic. In modern fan decoration, however, this style is almost entirely neglected.

The principal difficulty in gouache painting, which, however, may be easily overcome by a little practice, is that of applying the colours at once with sufficient depth. Colours appear deeper while moist, but they lose one-third to one-half of their value in drying. Great allowance must therefore be made for this change of effect. The middle tints are painted broadly with plenty of paint in the brush, and with the determination to carry the tint once commenced evenly up to the next outline of form, even if it seems too dark, and to let it dry before altering it. In most cases it will dry more satisfactorily than was expected, especially as it will be found that

some deeper shadows which are to be added will lower the value of the middle tint somewhat. A painter who has practice will not stop at any outline, but will go on grounding from one part to another, quickly blending contrasting colours into one another while wet, thus obtaining natural transparency of colour and the charming gradations. Yellow can be melted into pale pink, and from that into purple, gray, and rich green in a single wash by keeping the work moist. This is managed by taking more paint in the brush than the material will absorb at once.

Sometimes the fabric does not retain sufficient paint for a solid grounding, and two or more coatings may be required. This is often the case when the painting is done on crêpe or gauze. To avoid it, a little alcohol or ox-gall has to be mixed with the water used for painting. If the grounding is solid, but possibly the colouring unsatisfactory, glazing with transparent water colour will afford desirable facility for altering and give greater richness to the tints without making the grounding more heavy by the superposition of another layer of body colour. A



blue tint can be changed into a green by putting yellow lightly over it; and pink can easily be turned into purple, or a vivid vermilion lowered, by a wash of pure blue. Brilliant red is better obtained by a layer of vermilion touched up with liquid carmine than by mixing the two colours on the palette. Without touching the colours one can heighten or lower their brilliancy by working on the surrounding tints. Red will be made more vivid by adjoining green, orange gives more brilliancy to violet, and every tint is heightened in its effect when put in juxtaposition with its complementary colour.

It may be said that, as a rule, the less colour used, the better; a heavy painting looks chalky, and often peels off in scales. Should the colour be entirely opposed to the tone desired, it is better to remove it with a brush and a little water than to overpower it by a heavy layer of paint. When the grounding is dry, the successive layers of light and finally the high relief may be put on.

In treatment, as in composition and colouring,

the artist must bear in mind the necessity of giving due value to the principal parts. To this end he does his utmost in certain places, while in others he may find it wise to check his hand. A painting depends for a great part of its charm on the artistic feeling with which the necessarily unequal handling of the work is managed. In order to give the illusion of space, prominent features must be relieved by striking details, while subordinate portions are massed together and artfully merged in the background by slurring the details as far as can be done without making it too obvious. A certain address and personal touch of the brush improve both form and colour greatly. The modern reaction against minute exactness of details and a melting, enamel-like touch has encouraged many painters to attain great skill in the broad, dashing manner. The Japanese artists decided this question for themselves long ago. For us it remains difficult and puzzling, since we see great artists adopting opposite practices in regard to the broad or the minute style of execution; and in either case



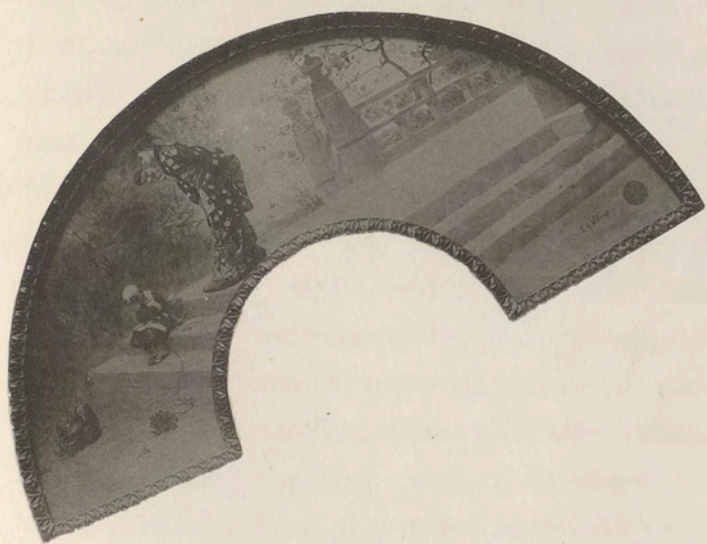
their works express exquisite taste, and have an equally good effect.

But, though one may be reluctant to follow fashion in art, it is not likely that we shall long resist the charm of a new style, when it coincides with good taste and is an improvement on former methods. To stand by the old principles merely from a sentiment of respect and faithfulness to what has always been considered correct would impede the attainment of a personal manner of treatment, and hinder progress in other ways. A much accredited opinion is that the touch should be broad in large paintings and delicate in small ones. Whatever the decision may be, it is of no material importance to fan painting, as either a dashing style or the minute finish may be adopted. The choice, indeed, will only depend on the decorator or on the preference of the happy lady for whom the work is wrought with so much solicitude.

Few are the fortunate painters who have the enviable gift of bringing their work directly to the right pitch of shade and hue, who find the result harmoniously balanced in every part as planned

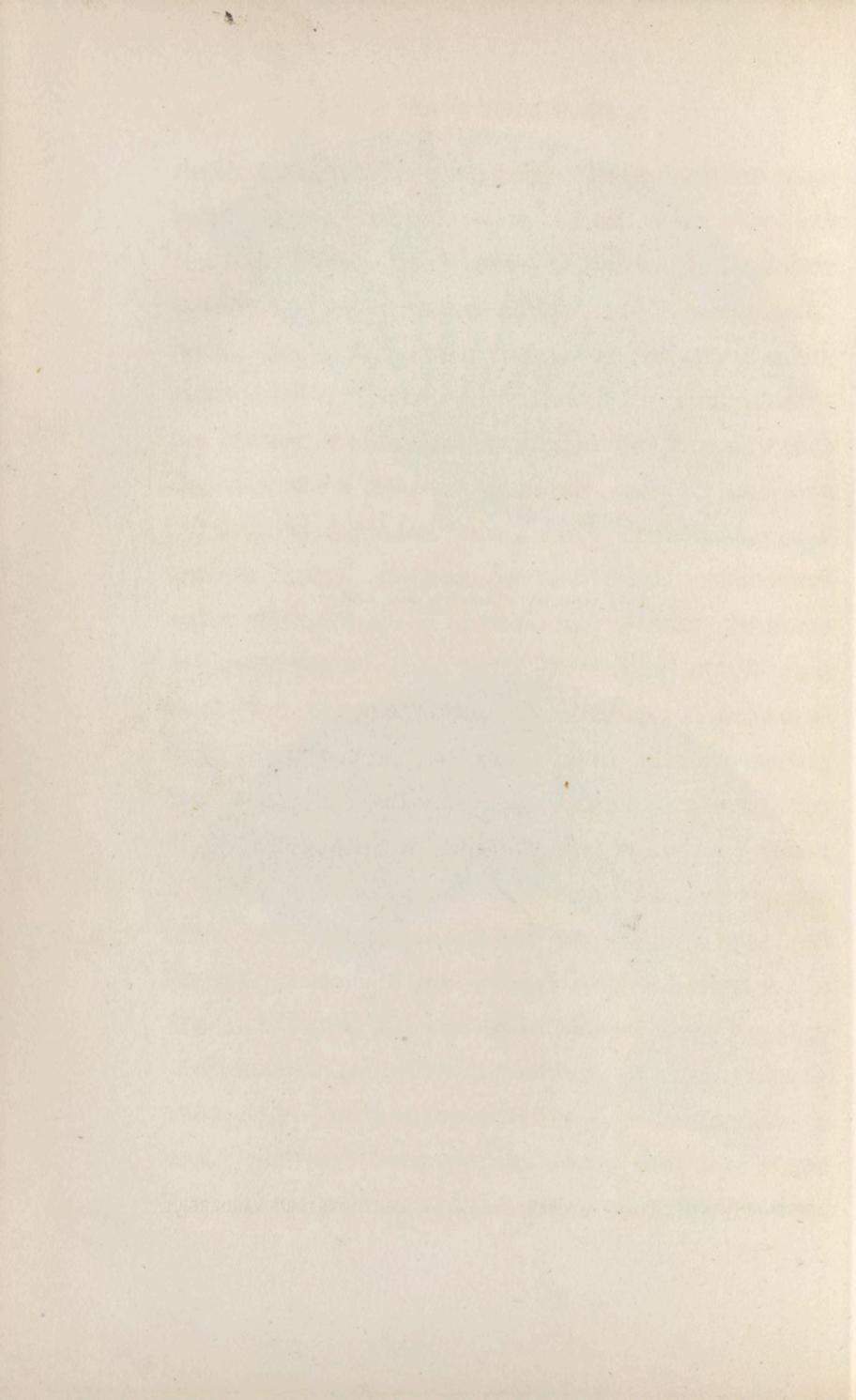


LATE LOUIS XVI. Owned by MISS HEWITT.



MODERN MOUNT, Painted by VIBERT. Owned by MRS. CORNELIUS VANDERBILT.





from the beginning. For such an artist to finish can only mean to add new character, beauty, and charm; but, for those who have to build up their paintings by degrees, to finish must necessarily mean a reviewing and correcting process. Notwithstanding all good intentions in composition, colour, and handling, the painting does not always give the pleasing impression which was expected. Various reasons may bring about this result. Sometimes too great equality of colour or an equal strength of shadow in the foreground with that of more distant parts destroys the perspective, and brings the distant objects to the same plane; or the effect of aërial distance and the transparency of shadows may be destroyed by heavy touches where the use of thin and limpid colour was needed. Too many or too strongly indicated details in the middle tints may need to be softened or removed, or perhaps brilliancy of light and relief heightened. Any of these shortcomings is sufficient to give the painting a disconnected, spotty appearance, which distracts the eye from the principal motive. But even then there is no reason to despair, for we



know that some of the greatest painters ponder long over their creations. Of all materials gouache is one of the most patient and helpful, by allowing us to repair mistakes without making us pay too dearly in the way of losing all freshness of tints. A wash of semi-transparent tint will cancel a multitude of details which one may have no reason to regret; or, when it is necessary, a veil of transparent shadow can be thrown on lights or colours that do nothing but contend with each other and destroy unity.

Scarcely any term in art is so little understood by the amateur artists as the word "finish." For some of them it simply means to count every petal of a flower, that not one may be omitted, and to polish their work until it looks as smooth and cold as a china painting. By means of finishing touches professional painters try, on the contrary, to correct the cold uniformity which they may have failed to avoid from the beginning. Free and elegant touches of the brush can in a certain measure give to a work that has cost much fatigue the charm of freshness spontaneously at-

tained by those who possess a more enviable power over material. To finish is, it may be repeated, to simplify, to give more character and expression, to animate the painting by touches which shall be like accents. These remarks will, I hope, be sufficient to show that the principles of fan decoration are the same as those of other painting.

It is a common error of beginners to fear that rules will fetter their imagination and prevent the free development of originality. When these principles of art are set before them, instead of accepting them, they fall into a certain discouragement. It may, therefore, be of service to remind them that the greatest geniuses in every art have been the first to master rules. In works of transcendent imagination which seem to be beyond rules, we can, if we study them carefully, find that the artist has conformed to certain changeless laws of art. These rules are, however, so skilfully concealed that only an intelligent understanding can perceive their controlling presence.

The truth that the highest excellence in any



branch of art is never attained by mere chance, becomes when once fully understood and accepted, most consolatory to those who delight in taking trouble over their work. Genius is nothing without energy and the capacity for taking pains.

A professional decorator cannot dispense with a wide and subtle knowledge of nature, nor with studies made from it with the most minute care. These may truly be called the capital of the artist, the reserve upon which he lives. But those who take up decorative art as a recreation, and have not sufficient time to win from nature all the material that is needed for imaginative combination, may easily find other resources. A large choice of photographs, engravings, designs and coloured plates, of which many are conscientiously outlined and shaded, is at their disposal. Directed by the taste which has impelled them to the pursuit of the art in question, they can employ material compiled by others in making charming arrangements. Decorations need not be literally copied, but composed by selection. By making a judicious choice of good

parts, rejecting bad ones, improving whatever is available, and bringing these features together so as to form a novel arrangement, the result may be called personal, and even original, since the art of composing stands far beyond the art of copying nature. In many cases amateurs who have thus commenced by using the material of others have been led by it to realize the feasibility and delight of studying from nature. Fan painting has become the means of revealing the dormant treasures of such an artistic temperament. Many a time it has been the first stepping-stone, soon abandoned for higher pursuits in art.

It is scarcely possible to think of a more charming present or a more artistic souvenir than a fan the subject of which expresses a noble thought or a tender emotion, or even which makes a modest, unpretentious attempt to arrange prettily the flowers of the field, delighting the simple and the learned alike.

Every artist ought sometimes to leave his larger canvases, and by trying to surpass what has already been done in this humbler line give us new ideas.



Nothing is more needful for a high enjoyment of life than a refined occupation which appeals to the sense of beauty. Fan painting is one of the most attractive of these, and it is also within the reach of every one who can devote but a portion of his leisure to it. In pictorial art generally the artist's whole time must be given, in order to accomplish anything important.

Not a few amateurs who have acquired a high degree of skill in their art studies have at the same time an intellectual culture which gives them a clear understanding of what it means to attempt pictorial art. These qualities tend to make them modest to self-distrust; and consequently they often do not go beyond their studies from nature, and leave their inventive qualities quite untried. But they need not hesitate to apply their accomplishments of eye, hand, and intelligence to this practical effort. They will find delight in using the creative power of their mind instead of restraining the timid inspirations of their imagination.

The practice of drawing was formerly regarded merely as an accomplishment; but it is now ad-

mitted to be a valuable discipline to the eye and mind, and one of the best means by which to increase the delicacy of our perception, to develop our faculty of admiration, to stimulate imagination, and thus to help the attainment of extensive culture.

I wish that space would allow me to speak at some length of the strange comfort which moments of leisure employed in an artistic pursuit afford, of the freshness and new interest given by it to life. More than any other consideration it would induce many persons to essay this calming and cheering occupation, which will enable them, even more certainly than will their pleasures, to forget themselves.

Let us, then, give our best skill to that decoration which, more than any other of her belongings, shows the refined taste of the lady; and let us hope that, encouraged by the generous appreciation of lovers of art, both the cultivated amateur and the skilled painter may be willing to lead in renewing the beautiful art of a by-gone day, while bringing it into sympathy with the thoughts and feelings of our own.



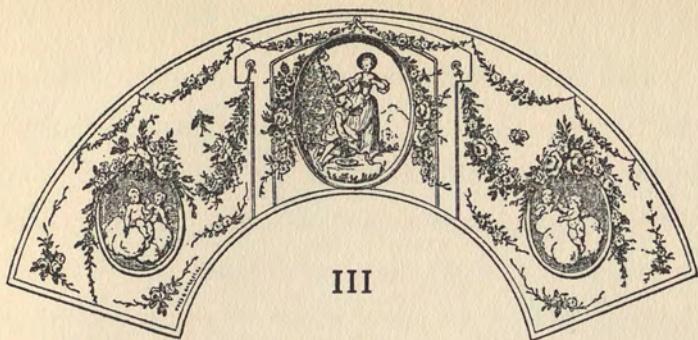


III

FAN COLLECTING







### FAN COLLECTING

*L'éventail, c'est l'épée de la femme.*

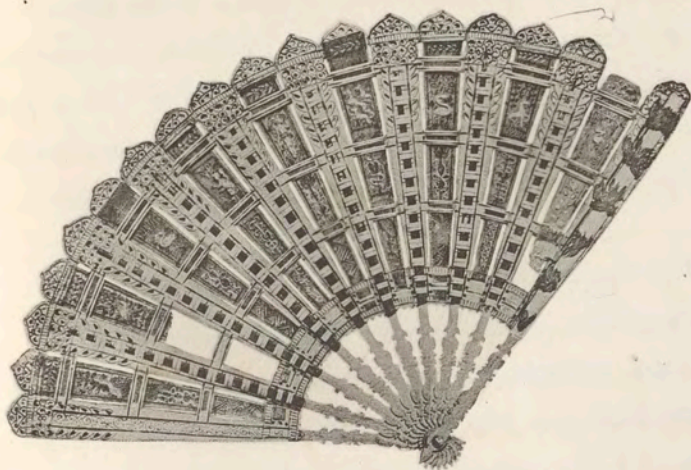
TO anyone who fortunately escapes being born with the collector's instinct, fans must seem so trivial that it cannot be worth while to spend time, money, and patience in gathering them together; and yet a little study of these immortal butterflies of art gives an interesting idea of what may be called the philosophy of style in decoration. As has been told in the first chapter, the fan comes to us from the far past of the East, where to this day it plays a large part in the life of the people; and in many Western rooms there are screens or hand fans brought home as curiosities which are identical in shape with those carved centuries ago upon the temple walls of Egypt and India.



The study of Eastern fans, like that of Oriental porcelain, is one by itself, requiring especial opportunities not easily to be found in Europe. According to the report of the Japanese commission to the French exhibition of 1878, the folding fan as we now know it was invented in the year 670 A.D., under the Emperor Ten-Ji, by an artisan of Tam-Ba, who was moved to crease into folds the stuff which had previously been stretched tight over screens by watching some bats opening and shutting their wings, from which the earliest fans were called Kōmori, which means a bat. The most famous Japanese artists of all periods have painted fans; and even at the present time it is not uncommon for a group of them, if they meet at a social gathering, to sketch upon the spot fans which are exchanged as keepsakes. Folding fans of iron, called tessen, were formerly carried by the travelling fencing students and teachers in Japan; and, if they were attacked by highwaymen or fellows of low degree, it was a point of honour that they should defend themselves only with these fans, reserving their swords for enemies of their own quality.



OLD CHINESE, Gold filigree and enamel. Owned by MRS. BUTLER DUNCAN.



FRENCH RENAISSANCE. Originally owned by HENRI III





It is hard for one who is more at home with European styles to pronounce as to the probable age of a Chinese or Japanese fan, because fashion changes in those countries according to rules with which we are unfamiliar, and also because, ever since the fifteenth century, the interchange of trade has brought into Eastern art centres many Western patterns which have been copied and returned to Europe with modifications. For instance, in the Lazarus collection in the New York Metropolitan Museum there is a Chinese fan of the peculiar French style known as "Cabriolet," which was scarcely more than a passing fashion in France; and it is impossible for any one not an expert in Oriental workmanship to say whether it was made a hundred and fifty years ago or only as many months.

Some beautiful Chinese fans are made all of silver or gold filigree, with a simple and graceful design in translucent enamel, usually blue or green, and absolutely the same on both sides, like the marvellous embroideries of the East. But, where there is a silk or paper leaf, it is



apt to be crowded with processions or groups of figures, in very bright colours, and often with the heads made of ivory and stuck on, as in the example given in the first chapter, the result being to our taste grotesque and inartistic. About a hundred years ago, and for some time later, when our grandfathers sent out for the charming old china, which in most families was broken up before people knew how fine it was, they were used also to order for their womankind fans of carved ivory, with an interlaced monogram in the centre. Some of these have survived, and are so delicate and fragile that they look more like frozen lace than any hard material.

The best authorities are agreed that the first folding fans known in Europe were brought back by the Portuguese, who were established at Goa early in the sixteenth century. In the reign of Henri III. of France they were widely used; and, in an interesting monograph published by M. Germain Bapst some years ago, he gives an account of one which was found stowed away in a garret room of the Louvre Museum, and

which, after a comparison with the description given at length by De l'Estoile, he believes to be the same one mentioned in the first chapter as having belonged to Henri III. himself, the leaf of which was of parchment, cut into openwork with the utmost delicacy, with a border like lace, of the same material. The mount has the usual two guards, and ten sticks painted yellow and shaped like arrows, which pass through little slits in the parchment leaf, the whole being ten inches high, and opening into rather less than half a circle. Between each stick the parchment is cut away except for its lace-like borders, and strips of mica inserted on which are painted the story of Diana and Actaeon. From certain details in the ornamentation, M. Bapst thinks that it was made towards the end of the Renaissance, about 1580, and that it is probably the oldest authentic European fan. As among the amusements of the effeminate Henri one of his biographers mentions that of cutting out paper into patterns, it is within the bounds of possibility, although not of course probable, that this fan may have been partly of his making, as cer-



tain irregularities in its workmanship show that it was cut with a sharp knife instead of a stamp. One which dates much further back than those usually found is in the Lazarus collection, marked as of the Italian Renaissance. The subject is the Judgment of Paris, the leaf of parchment is much worn, and the drawing poor, Venus being far from lovely; but there is a certain freedom of treatment which gives it value.

The darker side of this age of contrasts is shown in the beautiful dagger fan of ebony and engraved ivory belonging to Mrs. Chauncey. The blade, which is strong and deeply grooved, slips back into what are apparently the sticks by means of a spring; and, when the handle has been fitted on, the potential instrument of death looks harmless enough. The decoration is worth notice, as showing how the characteristics of a race reveal themselves even in trifles. On one side of the simulated guards a peasant girl is dancing, while on the other a boy is playing with a spear. If a German craftsman had done the work, there would have been a touch of grim humour somewhere; but the Italian who wrought it was of lighter



ITALIAN RENAISSANCE, dagger fan. Owned by MRS. HENRY CHAUNCEY.





heart, and his garlands and birds are quite unmindful of what they cover.

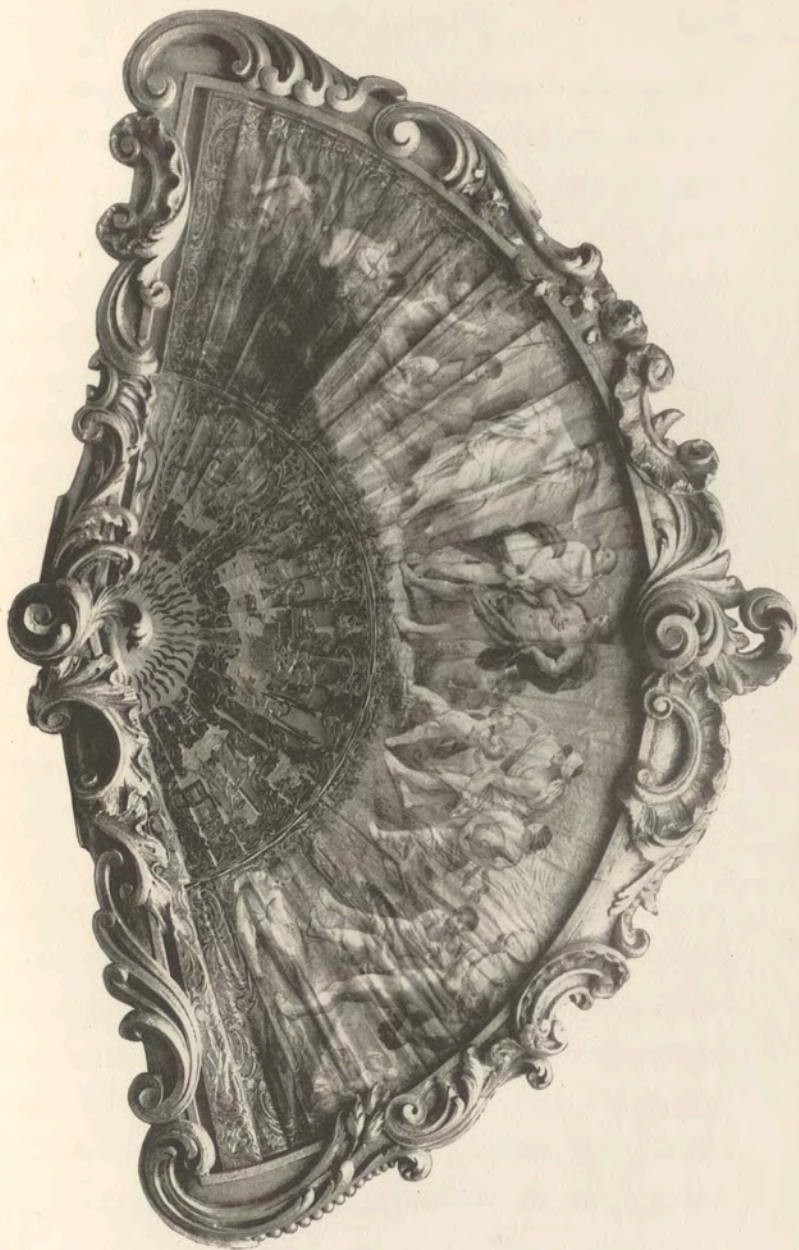
Some of the Italian fans of the seventeenth century were very beautiful, and there are enough of them still extant to allow of our judging them as a class. The Italian painters of the day, and those of France who had studied in Italy, still revelled in brilliant and harmonious colour, and also took delight in adapting their work to any exactions of shape or size which might be imposed on them by architect or builder, as they were thus given an opportunity to show their knowledge of composition, perspective, and foreshortening. Their fans are rather lunettes on a small scale, the sticks being very short, simple, and entirely subordinate to the sweeping leaf, opening to a full half-circle, and displaying scenes from history or mythology painted with a knowledge of drawing and a feeling for colour which make them really works of art. Black and white cannot do justice to the example from the collection of Mr. Clarence King, for one of its chief charms is in its colouring; but it gives a good idea of the usual class of



subject and the manner of its treatment, and is also interesting because the style of its mount is that of at least fifty years later, a frequent occurrence mentioned in the first chapter, and which is apt to be somewhat misleading. Probably in many cases the leaf, if especially fine, was kept unmounted, as they are now if painted by well-known artists, and only made into a fan for some especial occasion, perhaps as a wedding present.

The well-worn simile of the stone flung into still water, to start ripples which grow weaker as they spread, might be applied once more to the magnificent impulse of the Renaissance, gradually losing itself in the formalism of the seventeenth century, especially in France. Although we know that the reign of Louis XIV. was very long, from 1643 to 1715, it seems to stretch almost indefinitely when we look up English dates, and realize that he was on the throne when Charles I. was beheaded, that he lived through the Protectorate and the reigns of Charles II., James II., William and Mary, and Queen Anne, and one year after the accession of George I. There is not another instance in

XVIIIth CENTURY. ITALIAN. Owned by CLARENCE KING, ESQ.







history of the domination of a great country for so long a time by a personality which was in itself essentially insignificant; nor could it have been possible with any people except the French, who, with all their many fine qualities, are not remarkable for a sense of humour. When, almost yesterday, Victor Cousin could write complacently, speaking of this period, "In a great century everything is great," we seem to hear an echo from the galleries of Versailles and the alleys of Marly. His subjects took the Grand Monarque very seriously, and it is but fair to say that he set them the example.

This may perhaps be forgiven him, for no man was ever more flattered and fooled from his cradle than he. For instance, the distinguished architect, Mansart, was in the habit of presenting plans for his approval in which such glaring mistakes had been made that the king could not fail to discover them at a glance, whereupon Mansart was duly and deeply surprised and impressed by his majesty's profound professional knowledge.

M. Henri Havard, in his interesting book "*L'Art à travers les Mœurs*," says that, in his opinion,



the most curious feature of this curious time was the existence of the periwig, and that a man who, in order to make himself more imposing, was willing to have his head shaved, and then to pile on it an artificial mass weighing a couple of pounds and costing a thousand francs, could not possibly think, act, and live like one who was content with natural conditions. English readers will be reminded of Thackeray's well-known drawing in his "Paris Sketch Book," where we see the insignificant real Ludovicus built up into the majesty of Ludovicus Rex by means of his towering head-dress and stilt-like heels.

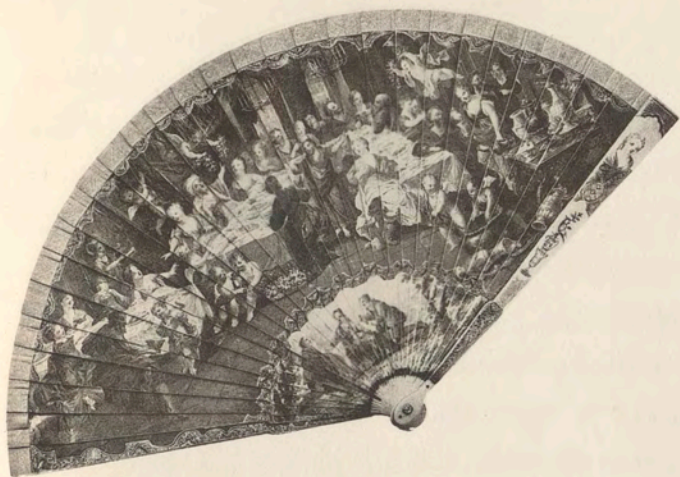
M. Quicherat remarks that Louis XIV. had very magnificent ideas, to which his taste, however, was not equal. He was a fairly good judge of literature; but in works of art he was incapable of appreciating anything beyond splendour and symmetry, two qualities which, in order to please him, had to be carried to excess. The effect of this imposition of a pompous mediocrity was soon seen in all the decoration of the time, which became elaborate to an extreme degree. Each ornament was balanced by another, and there were no plain

spaces on which the eye could rest. Mythological and historical subjects were still painted on the fans, but the broad treatment which had held over from the Renaissance now gave way to an excess of detail. The sticks, usually of ivory or mother-of-pearl, were longer, and elaborately carved and gilded. In most specimens they overlap each other, so that they make a single piece when opened; but sometimes each stick has one or more medallions, and there is a little space between them. Often one subject was not thought enough for the leaf, so two or three were crowded in, and divided by intricate borders. The scenes from history most often reproduced were those representing powerful warriors, like Darius, Alexander, or Achilles, in compliment to a king who was assured that he possessed military genius, or Solomon receiving the Queen of Sheba, as strangers were expected to be dazzled by the splendour of the Court. It seems almost an unconscious prophecy that Belshazzar's Feast should also have been a favorite subject, as in a fine vernis Martin in the Lazarus collection. Another specimen represents the Queen's visit to

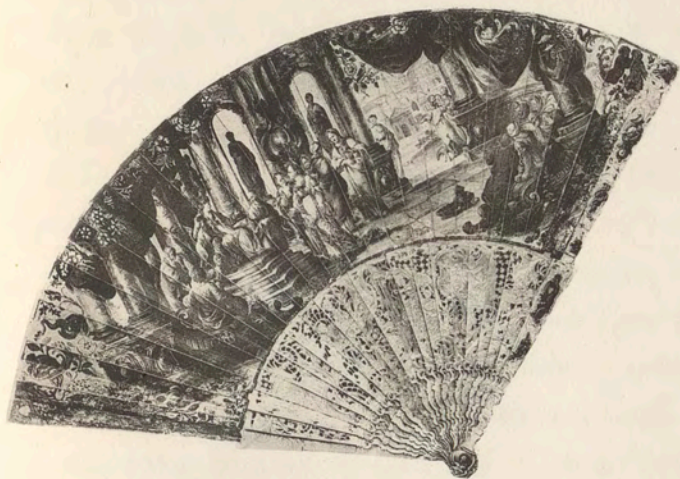


the wise King, and a characteristic detail is found in the curtains looped between the pillars of the hall. As yet there was not much drapery in the rooms where people lived; but in pictures, tapestries, and fans it is everywhere.

About the middle of the century the fashion for Chinese porcelain and furniture, and for copies of what was supposed to be the Chinese style, introduced another element into what was already sufficiently complicated and overcharged. M. Havard says in his "*Dictionnaire de l'Ameublement*" that it is not easy to determine the exact time when the taste began to spread; but M. Larousse is of the opinion that it followed the publication in 1617 of the travels of the Jesuit Fathers in China, written by one of their order. Cardinal Mazarin, who was one of the greatest of collectors, had a particular fancy for Oriental art; and in an inventory of his belongings made in 1653 mention is made of what must have been remarkable pieces of furniture and embroidery. There is an interesting and touching passage in the memoirs of Brienne, who was his secretary, and who



LOUIS XIV. BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST. VERNIS MARTIN. In the LAZARUS COLLECTION.



LOUIS XIV. SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA. In the LAZARUS COLLECTION.





says: "I was walking one day in the small gallery hung with tapestry representing the story of Scipio, than which the Cardinal had none finer, when I heard him coming, shuffling along in his slippers and dragging his feet wearily, like a man weak from sore sickness. I hid behind the tapestry, and heard him say, 'Must I leave all this!' He had to stop at every step to gather a little strength; and he turned first to one side and then to another, and, as each beautiful thing met his eye, he would say again from his very heart: 'Must I leave all these which I have taken such pains to gather? I shall not see them where I am going!'"

The visit of the Siamese embassy in 1682 also helped to bring Eastern fashions into favour; and there is a drawing by Arnoult, dated 1687, representing a lady in "a summer gown of Siamese stuff," which was, however, probably woven nearer home. French artists and artisans soon learned to imitate Chinese models with variations of their own; and in the case of fans the leaf was sometimes imported from



China and mounted on French sticks, or a French leaf added to sticks which had been carved or enamelled in the Flowery Kingdom, the result being a somewhat confusing mixture.

Attempts were early made to imitate the lacquers and transparent varnishes for which China has always been celebrated; and as far back as 1691 we find the names of the Langlois, father and son, Paty, and Des Essarts, well known as cabinet-makers, who used these beautiful finishes. Rongeret and Dagly were also successful in this branch, the latter being in 1713 director of a workshop established in the royal manufactory of the Gobelins, which turned out some very fine pieces. But all these names are now forgotten; and, when we see furniture or fans of that day in which the painting is covered with a brilliant enamel-like surface, it is pronounced at once to be "verniss Martin." There were four brothers of that name, who followed the same trade, and brought it to great perfection, having several establishments in different quarters of Paris. Properly speaking, their work belongs to the reign of Louis XV., as

they were granted letters patent in 1730, giving them the exclusive right during twenty years of making "all sorts of work in relief, and in the style of Japan and China." In 1748 their workshops were declared to be a royal manufactory; and then it was that they stopped copying Eastern art, adopted French subjects, and covered with their marvellous varnish cabinet-work, carriages, sedan chairs, and fans. These latter were made of straight strips of ivory, often painted as finely as miniatures; and, unless they have had very severe usage, the varnish is still as hard and bright as when it was new. The foregoing explanation has been given because vernis Martin fans differ widely among themselves, although they can never be mistaken for any other style. Some have the pompous subjects and conventional treatment which we associate with Louis XIV., and are decorated in the Chinese style; while those made later are more in the manner of Watteau and Boucher. Dealers are apt to insist that every painted and varnished ivory fan is a "real vernis Martin," and worth a great deal of money; but beginners at



collecting may do well to remember that the fashion for these fans lasted a considerable time, and many poor ones were turned out by inferior artists. To go back for a moment, it is undoubtedly true that the influence of Oriental models, with their irregular designs and seemingly capricious decoration, had much to do with discrediting the ponderous and mannered style of the Grand Monarque, a fact of which he was conscious; and in 1709 an Order of Council forbade "all persons, of whatever condition, selling, buying, or keeping any stuffs or furniture, old or new, coming from India, China, or the Levant." This order was renewed several times, even as late as 1730, but always remained a dead letter; and during the seven years of the regency, from 1715 to 1723, taste in France assumed a new phase, which at its best is the most charming and artistic of modern times. The last trace of the Middle Ages disappeared when the most famous artists taxed their skill to its utmost to adorn the boudoir, which now first came into fashion, replacing the oratory of the mediæval châtelaine and the small withdrawing-room

which had sufficed for the seventeenth-century lady.

The uncrowned reign of Madame de Maintenon, with its mixture of prudery and hypocrisy, had never been popular in France; and a natural reaction against the formalism which had fairly oppressed the taste and habits of the country showed itself in art by delicate designs and graceful shapes with ornamentation sparingly applied. The heavily gilded overlapping sticks of the fans, for instance, gave place to lighter ones, often painted in delicate colours, while on the leaf was a pastoral subject after the manner of Watteau or Laneret. Some of the most beautiful fans belong to this time, but its comparative simplicity, unfortunately, did not last very long; and what is known as the style of Louis XV. is extremely elaborate, although never so theatrical and pompous as that of his predecessor. It may be said here that it is impossible to draw any hard and fast line which shall divide one period or style from the next, as they merge into one another almost imperceptibly, like any natural growth or development. Individual taste or as-



sociation and the frequency with which a workman would use up his old stock with his new, as when he mounted a new leaf on sticks which he had on hand, combine to make it often impossible to decide at once with authority the precise date of a piece of furniture or a fan.

It is universally acknowledged that, while she did much to ruin her country financially, the influence of Madame de Pompadour was an excellent thing for art. Although her enemies cast at her that she was only a bourgeoisie, she had been most carefully educated, and had many of the instincts and tastes of a great lady. Her brother also, whom she made Marquis de Mairigny and Ménars and director-general of buildings, gardens, arts, and manufactures, filled this large place well, and between them they encouraged any artistic novelty. The discovery of Pompeii in 1748 led to copies of its delicate and fanciful decorations, which were often applied to fans, but without the strict adherence to the classical style which was in fashion about fifty years later.

In 1755 an Englishman, Mr. Josiah Child, brother of the Earl of Tilney, introduced the



EARLY LOUIS XV. After LANERET. Owned by MRS. F. R. JONES.





*cabriolet*, a light, two-wheeled cart which was so called because of its lively motion. It became very popular in Paris, and in June of that year Horace Walpole wrote to Mann that "everything is to be *en cabriolet*: the men paint them on their waistcoats, and have them embroidered for clocks to their stockings; and the women, who have gone all the winter without anything on their heads, are now muffled up in great caps with round sides, in the form of, and scarce less than, the wheels of chaises." The name was given to one kind of chair; and a particular pattern of fan, of which an illustration is given in the first chapter, was also called *cabriolet*, nearly every specimen having one of these carts or some other light vehicle as part of its decoration.

It is interesting to notice that what is usually known as the style of Louis XVI. was really in existence some years before he came to the throne. One of the difficulties in fan collecting is the impossibility of assigning to any one of them a fixed date unless it happens to have been painted for such occasions as a royal birth or wedding or to commemorate the visit of one



sovereign to another. But there are a great many pieces of furniture preserved in the Garde Meuble or other Paris museums, and also in private collections, about which everything is known; and some of them, made as early as 1755, when the influence of Madame de Pompadour was still paramount, are fine and pure examples of what is usually identified with thirty years later. The influence of Rousseau was very considerable in bringing what may be called an artificial rusticity into fashion both in manners and in art. His "*Nouvelle Héloïse*" was published in 1761, and "*Émile, ou l'Éducation*," the year after; and, when ladies no longer sent their children out to nurse, but kept them ostentatiously in their arms or at their feet, we find the fans hung with garlands of flowers, and shepherds and shepherdesses in very fine clothes making offerings to Friendship on altars set up in gardens, while lambs with wreaths round their necks personify Innocent Sentiment. The chief difference between the style of Watteau and that which prevailed in the time of Rousseau is that the nymphs and swains who disport them-

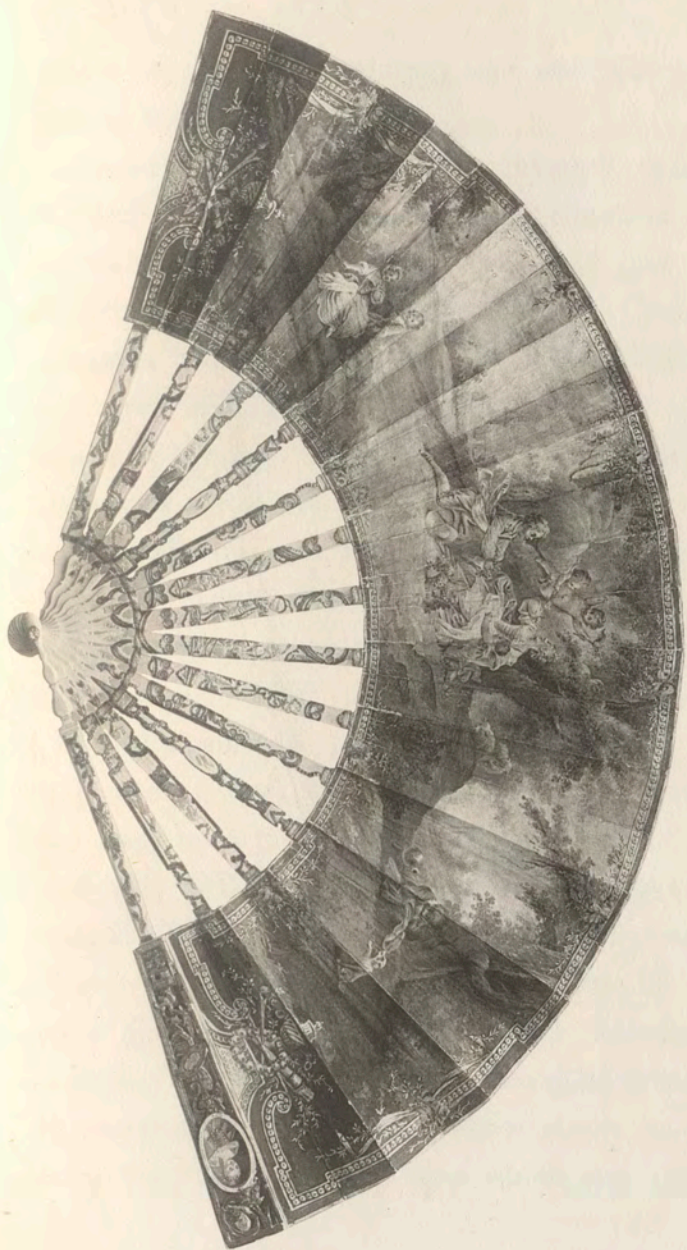
selves in sylvan glades or formal gardens on the canvases of the former and of his followers seem to be amusing themselves after their own fashion, while fifty years later they appear always conscious of being looked at, and are usually doing something which is meant to be either moral or sentimental.

With Madame du Barry yet another impulse was given to manners, and their reflection in art, which differed widely from the old standards. Madame de Pompadour, although not of noble birth, had received the training of a gentleman, and had been consequently always used to the formal manners of good society, and also to wear clothes which, as we can see by the engravings of Moreau Jeune, made children look like little men and women, and must have obliged a dignified deportment. The head of a young gentleman of quality, for instance, was usually shaved and his first wig made when he was seven years old; and from that time until his death he often scarcely saw the color of his own hair, while in Madame de Genlis's memoirs we have a painful picture of the miseries which



small girls had to suffer in their stiff and voluminous apparel, modelled exactly on that of their mothers. One of the details of French court etiquette forbade that any fan except her own should be opened in the presence of the queen; and, if she happened to drop a glove or ask one of her ladies for anything, it was handed on the latter's half-opened fan.

But Madame du Barry, the daughter of a poor country girl, whose training was chiefly gained peddling trinkets in the streets of Paris and in a shop where she worked as a milliner, was naturally ill at ease in surroundings which were only tolerable to those always accustomed to them. Her natural quickness and taste enabled her to imitate the manners of good society, so that she did not make herself ridiculous at Court; but in her own apartments, and in her *château* of *Luciennes*, she threw off all restraint, and indulged herself in loose garments and comfortable furniture which were really the first appearance of what is now the modern tea-gown, lounging-chair, and divan, while she replaced the pompous flunkys of the old régime by her negro page, *Zamore*, on



EARLY LOUIS XVI. Owned by MISS HEWITT.





whose treacherous testimony she was afterwards sent to the scaffold.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the fan with a leaf of parchment, vellum, or silk, which was necessarily costly, began to give way to those painted on gauze or paper. Coloured spangles had been used for a long time, but they now grew in favour; and not fans alone, but every article of dress on which they could be sewn was bedizened with them.

The natural sympathy inspired by the sufferings and heroic death of Marie Antoinette has caused her to seem a more important figure in the history of her time than if she had died peacefully and in power. Especially has the influence of her personal taste upon the art of her time been much overrated. As a child, she had very little education. When she was married at fifteen, she could neither write nor speak French correctly; and throughout her life her chief likings were for high play, fine clothes, and jewels. There was, of course, beautiful furniture in rooms fitted up for her; but it seems to have been the outgrowth of a style which was already



well started. It is impossible that any woman with really good taste should have helped to contrive—as it is well known that she did—the towering head-dresses, surmounted by men-of-war, windmills, and classical ruins, which are characteristic of her influence over fashion. Even before her misfortunes there was a very definite change in style, with which she seems to have had nothing to do. As existing schools all recalled the monarchy and aristocracy of which the people were growing more and more impatient, their minds turned to the traditions of Greece and Rome, which were so distant that only what was high and noble remained, and simplicity of decoration naturally followed the longing for greater simplicity of life.

Two fans in the first chapter illustrate the change very clearly. In the Garden Scene, although the group is still conventional, the decoration of twisted ribbons and flowers in straight lines is very simple and delicate; while a few years later, in Cornelia with her children, we have the full-fledged classical subject, although it will be noticed that the sticks belong to the

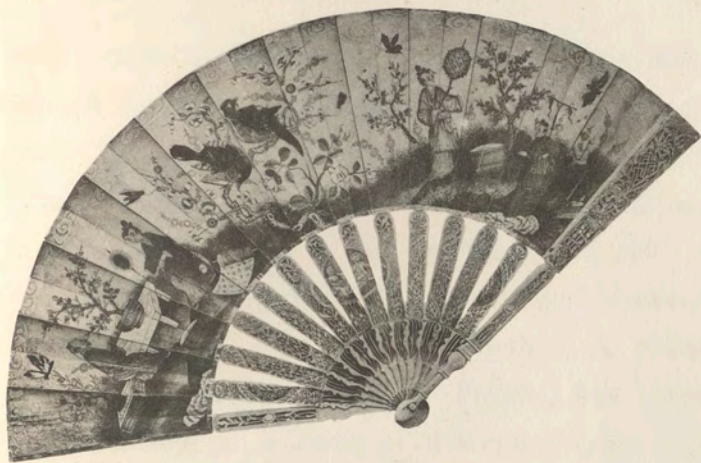
earlier manner. It was difficult, after so many years of wigs and high heels, to become sternly Roman all at once.

During the Revolution the fan often became a satire, a homily, or a declaration, being covered, as has been said in the first chapter, with emblems, political sentiments, and likenesses of popular leaders, usually printed directly on paper or cut out and pasted on muslin or wood. The period of the Directory was one of transition; and either because the trades which supplied luxuries had suffered, or because the heroines of antiquity who were supposed to set the fashion did not carry fans, there are not many which can be definitely ascribed to that time. Under the Empire they were very small, and made of horn, ivory, sandal-wood, or spangled gauze; but the beautiful painted leaf with carved sticks had disappeared, and the fan as a work of art had practically ceased to exist. Those made after the Restoration were as ugly as the furniture of that hopelessly inartistic interval. On them, as on the clocks and candlesticks, mothers with leg of mutton sleeves and drooping curls

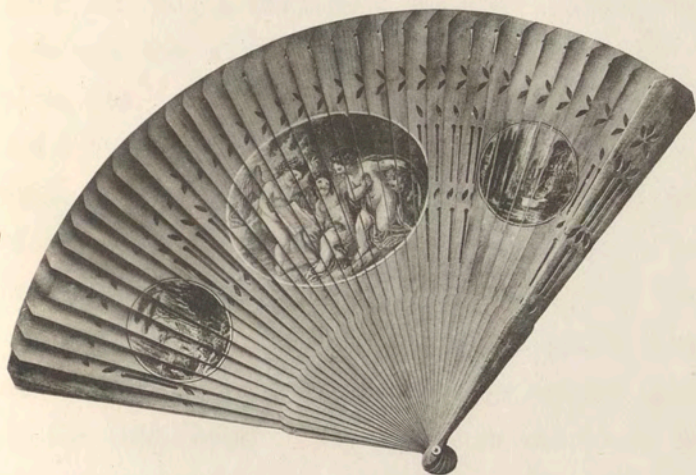


taught their children to read, or groups of ladies listened to a troubadour in an impossible costume playing a guitar; but the leaf was either coarsely printed in colours or painted in a very commercial manner, and the workmanship of the sticks was decidedly poor. During the Second Empire many expensive and beautiful fans were made of fine laces or painted by well-known artists; but in most cases the mount is commonplace, while in the old specimens it is often quite as good and as original as the leaf.

It is easy to see why the fan should no longer be an almost essential part of a woman's dress and every-day life. Before the time of daily newspapers and the emancipation of women, politics were largely carried on in society; and the fan was an instrument of political and social intrigue. In the engravings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries we constantly see it used to shelter a correspondence or make an evident signal; and in the traditions of the French stage it plays an important part. Now that politics are the affair of the many, and women are free to come and go as they will, and send telegrams



LOUIS XIV. CHINESE STYLE. In the LAZARUS COLLECTION.



LATE LOUIS XVI., or EARLY DIRECTORY. Colored prints pasted on sandalwood sticks.  
Owned by MRS. F. R. JONES.





and letters by the dozen, the fan is of no more use as an aid or an accomplice, except in countries like Spain, where women are still to some extent watched and secluded, and where the fan is still an ally as well as an ornament, with a language and etiquette of its own, and manuals in which they are fully set forth. A pretty Spanish legend says that, as Psyche was sleeping one day on a bank of flowers, Zephyr kept hovering near her, at which after a time jealous Cupid took offence, and as a punishment plucked off one of Zephyr's wings, and gave it to Psyche that she might ever have cooling breezes; and this was the origin of the fan.

It has seemed less confusing to speak in this brief notice chiefly of the fans of France, because it is there that the finest specimens were produced in the past as at the present day; but many were made in England, and they have a character of their own, like the English furniture, which is well shown by the specimen given in the first chapter. It may seem absurd to say that they have a more moral and domestic look than the French fans, and yet it is quite true.



There is the same difference that there is between the writings of Rousseau and of Goldsmith, who lived at the same time, and were subject to the same general influences. Ornamentation in the classical style was usually purer in England than in France, for the reason that her artists copied directly from the antique,—as Wedgwood, for instance, took the designs for his pottery from Etruscan vases; while the French, like David, made original drawings in what they considered to be the Greek or Roman manner.

A taste for collecting fans is amusing, and not necessarily expensive, unless one aspires to the possession of very fine specimens; and, although the day for great bargains is over, very good ones may still be picked up, and not infrequently in America. In one way they are more puzzling than silver or china; for they have no hall mark nor factory stamp, and the old ones are almost never signed. A few general rules as to style may be some guide, but observation and comparison with those in collections will be much more useful; and no collector of moderate means can hope to be really successful unless he has that

sort of instinct called by the French "scent," which will enable him sometimes to be independent of rules. The actual sense of smell is often very useful, by the way, because, if an old fan had been mended and touched up, the paint and varnish used will keep their odour for a long time, which may easily be detected, especially after the fan has been held for a few minutes in the hand.

As a general rule, fans are supposed by their owners or stated by dealers to be older than they really are; and to give an opinion often requires a certain amount of tact, as, for instance, when one is asked by its proud possessor to admire a specimen said to have belonged to Mary Queen of Scots, but which could not possibly have been made within a hundred years after her death. With the great majority of old French fans the costume of the figures on them is the best guide, as these are always in the dress of the day, unless the subject is classic or mythological; and even then there are frequent lapses which betray the actual period.

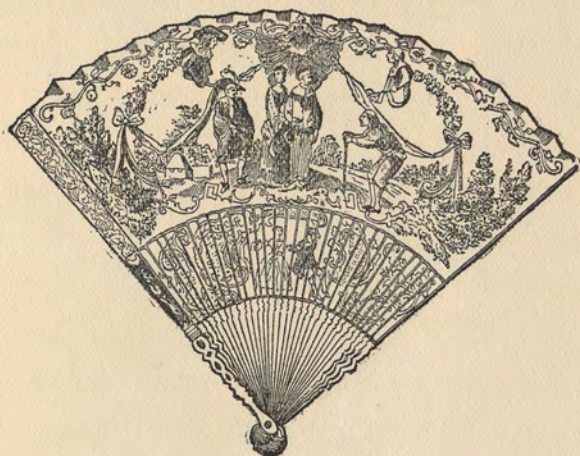
If they are of any considerable value, they should be kept wide open in frames or in a



glass case, as each time that they are closed and opened again the creases become more marked and worn; and, if carried, they should never be held too near the fire, as heat warps them. When at rest in their boxes, they should be wrapped in tissue paper with a ribbon or an elastic strap around the guards, in order that the sticks may be kept close together. While the modern imitations of old enamels and china are so perfect that even experts may be deceived by them, the reproductions of old fans have as yet been of an ordinary commercial character; and it is doubtful if skilful counterfeits of fine specimens could be made to pay unless the fashion for the originals takes harder hold than it has done as yet.

Year after year every corner of Europe is searched by a little army of dealers' agents, so that the chance of finding a treasure with which its owner is willing to part for the traditional song grows more and more unlikely; but in the modest curiosity shops of the smaller towns there are still opportunities, and charming specimens have even been found, like birds blown out of

their way by a storm, on the more prosaic shelves of second-hand dealers in America. While there is no possible standard as to price, a good old fan does not as yet cost more than a really handsome modern one; and there is always about it the subtle attraction of a fragility which has outlasted human strength and life.







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